



71

DIGITAL
EDITION

SPAWN



IT'S OVER.

AFTER WREAKING HAVOC ON THE DENIZENS OF RAT CITY, THE MALEVOLENT MESSIAH KNOWN ONLY AS THE FREAK HAS MET HIS FATE AT THE HANDS OF SPAWN.

TAKING TANGIBLE FORM--MAGGOTS, WORMS, ALL MANNER OF PARASITES--THE SINS OF ONE MAN'S LIFE NOW DEVOUR THEIR MAKER.

ASHES
TO
ASHES...

WITHOUT EVEN UNDERSTANDING HOW, SPAWN SUMMONED UP A WAVE OF KARMIC FORCE, PURGING THE TWISTED, MALIGNANT EVIL FROM THE MADMAN'S SOUL AND TURNED IT BACK ON HIM.

THE ALLEYWAYS YAWN. A COLD WIND RISES UP, SPREADING OUT ACROSS THE CITY, AS THE FREAK WRITHES IN HIS FINAL DEATH THROES, RECLAIMED BY THE DARKNESS HE EMBRACED.

DUST TO
DUST...

A large, dark, winged figure with a red cape and glowing yellow eyes stands over a massive pile of severed, segmented limbs and heads. The figure is holding a severed head in its right hand. The background shows a city street with buildings and a cloudy sky. The figure is wearing a black mask with a single yellow eye visible.

STILL SEETHING
WITH ANGER,
SPAWN REGARDS
HIS HANDIWORK
WITH QUIET
PRIDE.

BRAVO!
BRAVO!

QUITE A
PERFORMANCE,
HELLSPAWN.

"LOOK
ON MY
WORKS, YE
MIGHTY, AND
DESPAIR."

HE WAS AN
ABOMINATION,
COG. HE ENGINEERED
A GANG WAR AND AL-
MOST SUCCEEDED IN
KILLING ME. HE GOT
NO MORE THAN HE
DESERVED.

A GANG
WAR YOU
DID ALMOST
NOTHING
TO AVERT.

HOW
MANY DIED
HERE TONIGHT?
AND FOR WHAT?
HE'S JUST ONE
MORE *CORPSE*
AGAINST THE
BARRICADES.



I'M TIRED
OF LISTENING
TO YOU, OLD MAN.
I JUST HAD MY
GODDAMN HEAD
BLOWN OFF
BECAUSE OF THAT
FREAK.

I'M NOT
IN A VERY
FORGIVING
MOOD.

SPARE ME
THE SELF PITY.
WHEN ARE YOU
GOING TO **FACE UP**
TO WHAT YOU ARE?
NOTHING AROUND
YOU HAPPENS BY
ACCIDENT.



YOUR MERE
PRESENCE HERE
ON EARTH AFFECTS
THINGS IN WAYS YOU
CAN'T EVEN **BEGIN**
TO COMPREHEND.
THIS **PLACE**, THESE
PEOPLE-- YOUR
FATES ARE
BOUND TO-
GETHER.

YOUR
EXISTENCE
MATTERS,
SPAWN. YOUR
ACTIONS MATTER.
AND IT'S TIME YOU
STARTED THINKING
A LITTLE MORE
BEFORE YOU
ACT.

I'M IN
NO MOOD
FOR
LECTURES,
COG. NOT
NOW.



TOUGH.
THE FORCES
YOU'RE DEALING
WITH MAKE NO
ALLOWANCES FOR
YOUR "MOODS".
YOU WANT TO BE
A MAN
AGAIN?



THEN
START
ACTING
LIKE A
MAN!



LOOK
AROUND YOU.
YOU HAVE TO
START PUTTING THE
PIECES OF THE PUZZLE
TOGETHER. WHAT DO
YOU THINK THAT
"DEAD ZONE" IS? WHY
DO YOU THINK YOU
LOSE YOUR POWERS
THERE?

YOU WANT
TO KNOW? IT'S
A **CELESTIAL
SAFE ZONE**.
LITERALLY A
SMALL PATCH OF
HEAVEN
HERE AMID THE
DESOLATION OF
RAT CITY.

AND
BELIEVE ME,
THEY'RE PAYING
CLOSE ATTENTION
TO WHAT GOES
ON HERE!

WHAT?!

WHAT ARE YOU
TELLING ME?

I ALMOST
DIED-- AND NOW
I'M SUPPOSED TO
BELIEVE THAT SOME
FILTH-RIDDEN HOLE
FILLED WITH JUNKIES
AND DEGENERATES
IS SOME HEAVENLY
REST STOP?

AND THAT THEY
JUST SAT BY AND LET
ALL THIS HAPPEN?
WHY SHOULD I
BELIEVE ANYTHING
YOU SAY? GO TO
HELL, COG!

BEEN
THERE, DONE
THAT. DON'T
CARE TO
REPEAT IT,
THANK
YOU.

SPAWN,
THIS **CURSE**
ISN'T GOING TO
JUST GO AWAY
BECAUSE YOU
IGNORE IT.



BY NOW I'D
THINK YOU'D
REALIZE THAT
HEAVEN AND HELL
BEAR LITTLE RESEM-
BLANCE TO WHAT
YOU LEARNED IN
SUNDAY SCHOOL.
AND THAT THESE
ALLEYS AREN'T
WHAT THEY
APPEAR TO BE.

DO YOU
THINK THAT A
PRIZED SOLDIER
OF *HELL* IS
GOING TO WALK
THIS EARTH WITH-
OUT *HEAVEN*
KEEPING
CLOSE TABS
ON YOU?

IF YOU-- AND
I-- ARE EVER GOING TO
FIND A WAY OUT OF THIS
CURSE, YOU NEED TO START
ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS.
I DON'T KNOW ALL THE
ANSWERS, SPAWN,
OR I WOULDN'T
BE HERE.

BUT I THINK
I CAN HELP
YOU WITH THE
QUESTIONS.

IF YOU
DON'T HAVE
THE ANSWERS,
OLD MAN, WHAT
GOOD ARE YOU
TO ME?



LOOK AT
YOU. ALL THIS
TIME AND YOU'RE
NOT *TWO STEPS*
FROM WHERE YOU
STARTED. THAT
HAS TO *CHANGE*,
SPAWN.

YOU
HAVE TO
CHANGE
IF YOU
WANT TO
SURVIVE.

SUBURBAN
QUEENS.

UNDER A WATCHFUL
MOON, A GENTLE
BREEZE SIGHS
THROUGH TREELINED
STREETS.

THE NIGHT IS QUIET AND
STILL, SAVE FOR THE SOFT
RUSTLING OF LEAVES ACROSS
MANICURED LAWNS.

GOOD-
NIGHT,
HONEY.
SWEET
DREAMS.

WARM AND SAFE BENEATH HER
BLANKETS, LITTLE CYAN FITZ-
GERALD SLEEPS LIKE AN ANGEL.

IT IS THE SLEEP OF
THE INNOCENT. THE
SERENE, GENTLE
SLUMBER OF
CHILDHOOD.

HER BREATH COMES
SLOW AND MEASURED
AS SHE DREAMS IN
BLISSFUL, WOMB-
LIKE COMFORT.

WITHOUT A
CARE IN
THE WORLD.

THE SAME CANNOT BE SAID FOR HER MOTHER. EARLIER TODAY-- FOR THE SECOND TIME IN RECENT MONTHS-- CYAN BROKE OUT INTO A VIOLENT, SEIZURE-LIKE OUTBURST.

WANDA BLAKE SIGHS. A TEETHING SOOTHER TIED TO AN OLD SHOE-LACE... FOR THIS CYAN RAN INTO TRAFFIC, SCREAMING HYSTERICALLY. SHE COULD HAVE BEEN HURT. OR KILLED.

WHY WOULD SHE DO THAT?



A WHILE BACK, CYAN WAS KIDNAPPED.* AFTER IT WAS OVER, EVERYONE WAS SURPRISED AT HOW WELL SHE HAD ADJUSTED. LIKE NOTHING HAD HAPPENED.

BUT IT'S CLEAR NOW THAT SOMETHING IS WRONG. SOME DELAYED REACTION TO THE ORDEAL, PERHAPS? A DEEP-SEATED EMOTIONAL TRAUMA?

PERHAPS EVEN SOME PERMANENT PHYSIOLOGICAL DAMAGE?

ALONE WITH HER THOUGHTS, WANDA BLAKE IMAGINES THE WORST.

*SPAWN 59-- Tom.

HEY BABE, SORRY I'M LATE...

HONEY, WHERE ARE YOU?

TERRY... THANK GOD YOU'RE HOME.

WHAT'S THE MATTER?

WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?

I GOT HUNG UP AT THE OFFICE AGAIN. NO BIG DEAL.

YOU OKAY?

WHERE'S CYAN?





SHE'S SLEEPING.

I *CALLED* YOU AT THE OFFICE. DIDN'T YOU GET MY MESSAGES?

YEAH, BUT THEY SAID IT WASN'T AN EMERGENCY. GUESS I JUST LOST TRACK OF TIME.



TERRY, "NOT AN EMERGENCY" DOESN'T MEAN "NOT IMPORTANT". YOU SHOULD HAVE CALLED ME BACK. I'M WORRIED ABOUT CYAN. SHE STARTED ACTING UP AGAIN. TODAY IT WAS HORRIBLE...



LOOK, YOU'RE PROBABLY JUST MAKING A BIG DEAL OUT OF NOTHING. SHE'S A *KID*. THEY GO THROUGH STAGES. YOU KNOW, "TERRIBLE TWOS" AND ALL THAT. I'M SURE SHE'S FINE.



REALLY? AND HOW ARE YOU SO SURE OF *ANYTHING*? WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU WERE HOME TO TUCK HER IN? YOU DIDN'T *SEE* HER EARLIER. THIS WASN'T A "STAGE." SHE WAS LIKE A *MANIAC*.

OKAY, JUST CALM DOWN.

NO, I *WON'T* CALM DOWN. THIS IS OUR *CHILD*. WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE A FAMILY, REMEMBER? WHAT HAPPENED TO THAT?



WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MAN I MARRIED?

SLAM

THE WIND PICKS UP FROM THE NORTH AS SAM AND TWITCH SCOUR THE SPRAWLING MAZES OF RAT CITY FOR THE BEING KNOWN AS SPAWN.

DAMN. I THOUGHT FOR SURE THIS WAS THE WAY.

CAN'T SEEM TO KEEP MY BEARINGS. IF I DIDN'T KNOW BETTER I'D SWEAR THESE FRIGGIN' ALLEYS KEEP MOVING ON US.

HARDLY LIKELY, SIR.

WELL, WE BETTER FIND SPAWN-BOY, PRONTO. NOT THAT I'M SURE WHAT TO DO *WHEN* WE FIND HIM. MAYBE IF WE DOUBLE BACK...

LOOK, SIR. THERE'S SOMETHING UP AHEAD.

HEY BOYS! HERE'S THE SITCH: SOME KIND OF ALLEY BUM *TURF WAR*. BUT THAT AIN'T THE HALF OF IT.

WE AIN'T CLEAR ON THE DETAILS, BUT SOMETHING *FREAKY* IS GOING DOWN. I DON'T KNOW, SOMETHING...

um...

PRETER-NATURAL, SIR?

YEAH. WHAT HE SAID.

WE'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE.

OKAY, IF YOU'RE SURE YOU GOT A HANDLE ON IT, WE'LL JUST FINISH UP ON OUR OWN.

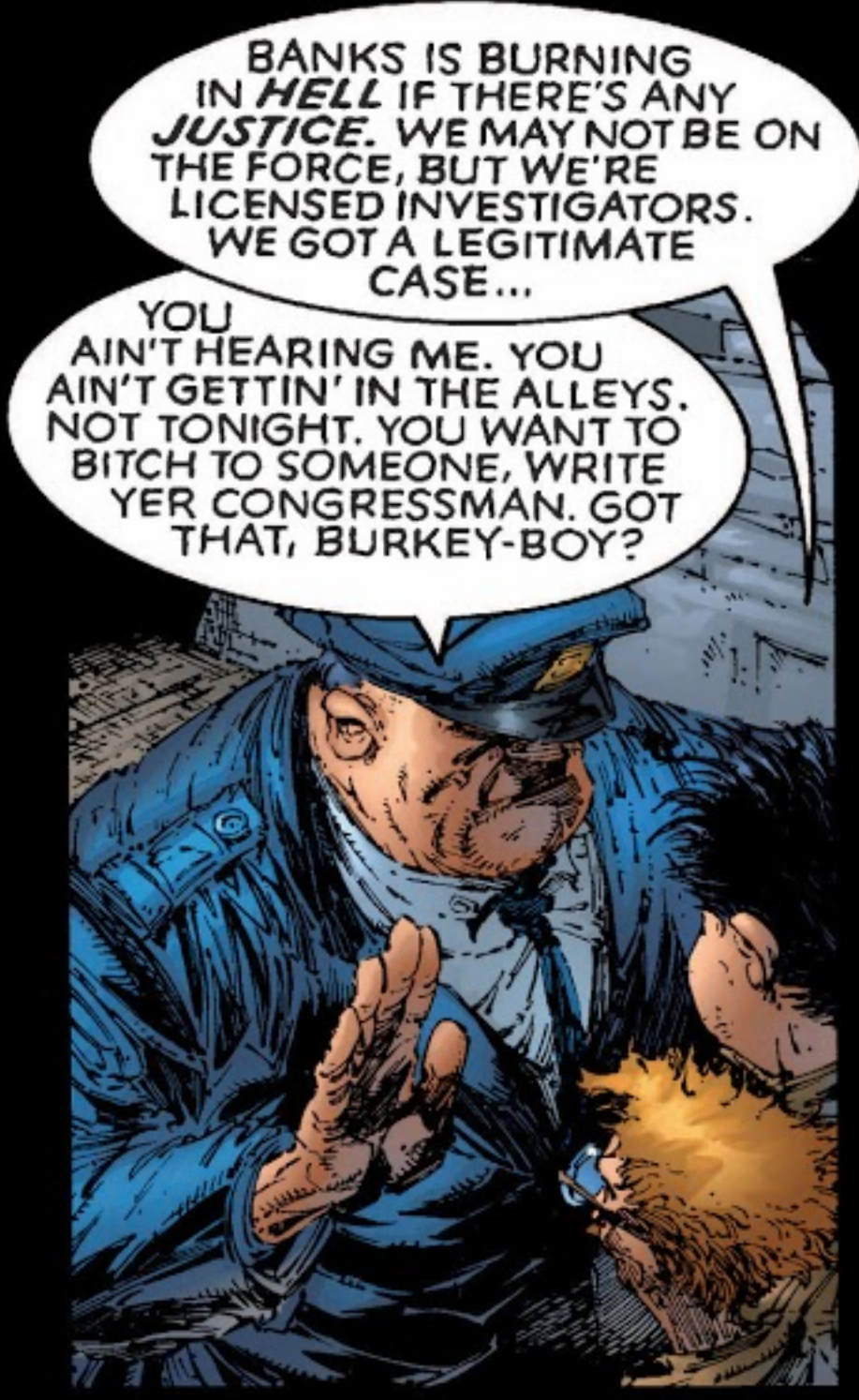
Uh-uh. YOU TWO AIN'T GOING NOWHERE.

AND WHY IS THAT?

'CAUSE THIS IS OFFICIAL *POLICE* BUSINESS. AND IN CASE YOU FORGOT, YOU TWO AIN'T ON THE FORCE NO MORE. *BANKS* HAD THE GOOD SENSE TO WEED YOU OUT, GOD REST HIS SOUL.

BANKS IS BURNING IN *HELL* IF THERE'S ANY *JUSTICE*. WE MAY NOT BE ON THE FORCE, BUT WE'RE LICENSED INVESTIGATORS. WE GOT A LEGITIMATE CASE...

YOU AIN'T HEARING ME. YOU AIN'T GETTIN' IN THE ALLEYS. NOT TONIGHT. YOU WANT TO BITCH TO SOMEONE, WRITE YER CONGRESSMAN. GOT THAT, BURKEY-BOY?



BESIDES, LOOKEE THERE!

HOLY LARD-ASS! AIN'T THAT THE *FATMOBILE* THEY'RE TOWING?



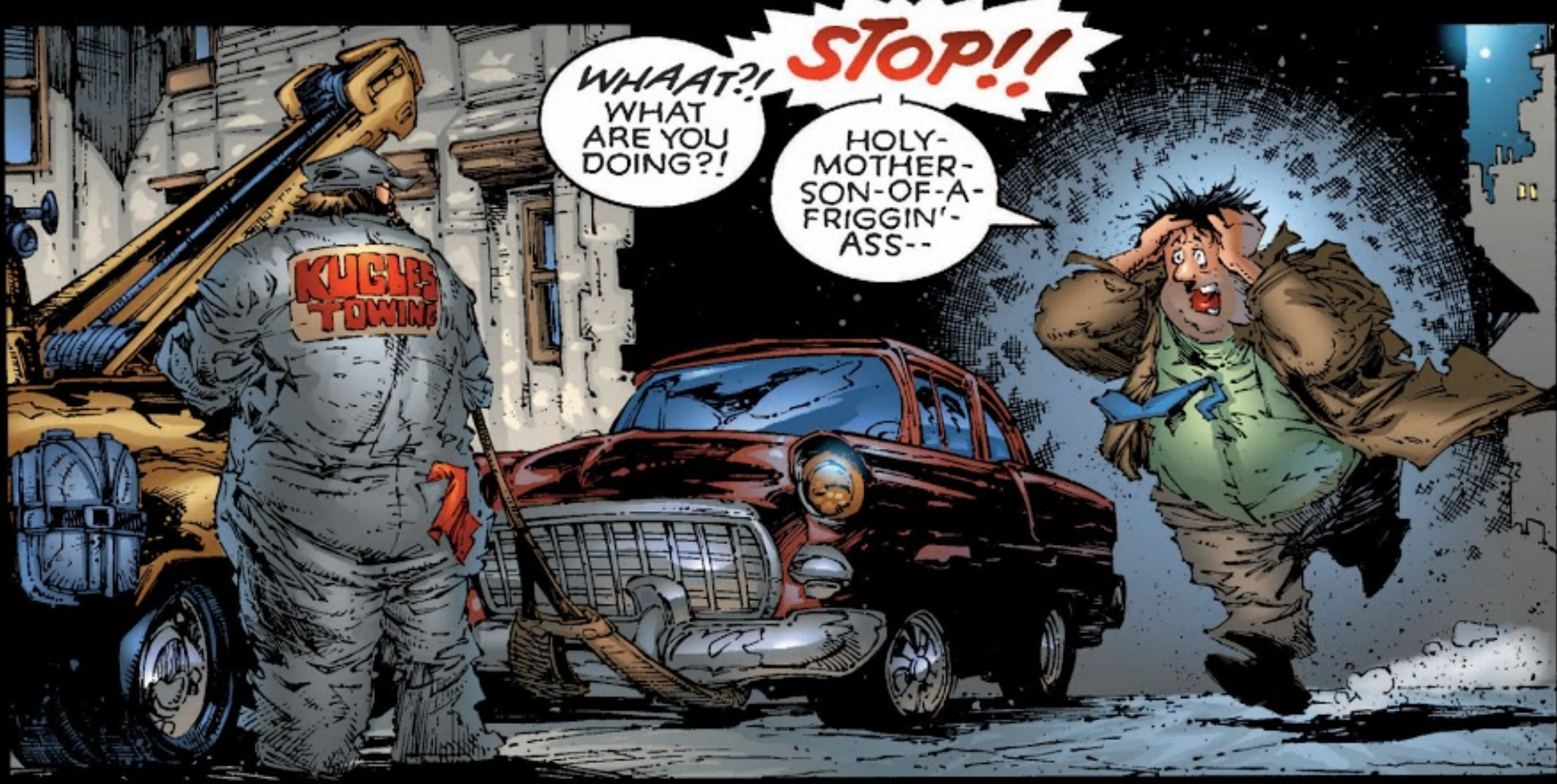
GEE, THAT'S A SHAME. TOO CLOSE TO A HYDRANT. WE'RE CRACKING DOWN ON THAT. PART OF THE MAYOR'S NEW CIVIC PRIDE CAMPAIGN.



STOP!!

WHAAT?! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

HOLY-MOTHER-OF-A-FRIGGIN'-ASS--



IMPRESSIVE, SIR. I DIDN'T REALIZE THERE WERE SO MANY *EXPLETIVES* IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. YOU'RE A VERITABLE "ROGET'S" OF PROFANITY.

PITY IT DIDN'T GET YOU OUT OF THE *CITATION*.

YEAH, WELL... LEAST THEY DIDN'T SCRATCH UP THE *CHROME*.



SO WHAT NOW, SIR?

WE COOL OUR JETS AND PLAN OUR NEXT MOVE.





LISTEN,
TWITCH. YOU
WANT *CULTURE*,
YOU GO TO THE
OPERA. YOU
WANT TO RELAX,
HAVE A LITTLE
FUN, BELIEVE
ME...



YOU
WERE
SAYING,
SIR?



LEMMIE
GO!



HEY!
C'MON,
BREAK
IT UP, YOU
MOOKS!

LOOK AT
THEIR EYES,
SIR. THEY
APPEAR TO
BE IN SOME
SORT OF A
TRANCE.



THE SEETHING
CROWD MOVES
IN A SAVAGE
GYRE. BODIES
FLY, CAREEN
AND COLLIDE
IN A MINDLESS
ORGY OF
VIOLENCE.



WAIT.
THERE'S
SOMETHING
NOT RIGHT
HERE...

YOU MEAN
BESIDES THE
SPONTANEOUS
OUTBREAK
OF MASS
VIOLENCE?



WITH THE TRAINED
EYE OF A VETERAN
DETECTIVE, BURKE
SCANS THE ROOM.
SOMETHING IS OUT
OF PLACE IN THE
BRUTISH SWIRL
OF MOTION.

GIMME
A SECOND.
I SMELL A
RAT.

SOMETHING
THAT MOVES IN
COUNTERPOINT
TO CHAOTIC
MELEE.



"WHERE IS IT?"



"WHERE
IS IT?"



"GOTCHA."

EXIT



MOVE IT, TWITCH!
THE WEIRDZO MAKING
OFF WITH THAT BROAD--
I THINK HE'S THE ONE
BEHIND THIS!

HOW
DO YOU
KNOW?

GUT
INSTINCT.

AND A
FORMIDABLE
INSTINCT IT
IS, SIR.



YOU WERE
RIGHT, SIR.
THE MAYHEM
STOPPED AS
SOON AS THE
GENTLEMAN
EXITED THE
BUILDING.

ALL RIGHT
BUDDY, PUT
THE GIRL
DOWN AND--

HUH?
WHERE
THE HELL
DID HE
GO?



"EXITED" IS
RIGHT! POOF!
INTO THIN AIR.
THIS NIGHT JUST
GETS WEIRDER
AND WEIRDER.

SIR, I
THINK YOU
SHOULD
HAVE A
LOOK AT
THIS.



HER
THROAT
HAS BEEN
RIPPED
OUT.

TEN
BLOCKS
AWAY.

LOOK AT
THIS! A
REGULAR
MASSACRE.

THIS IS WHAT
OUR FAIR CITY
HAS SUNK TO-- A
TURF WAR OVER
WHO GETS THE
BEST CARD-
BOARD BOX.

YER ALL
HEART,
Y'KNOW THAT
BOYLE?

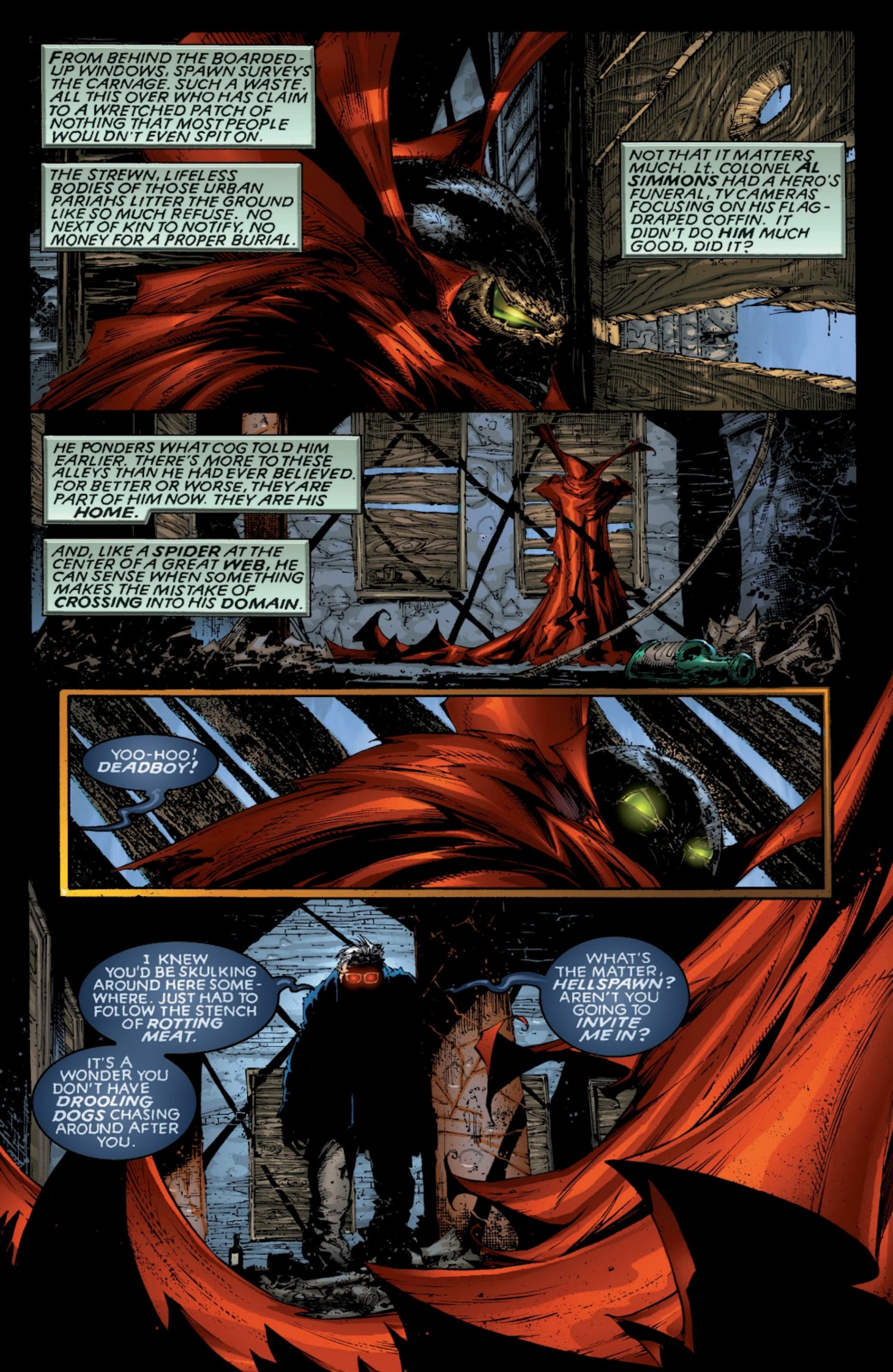
HEY SLIM.
YOU WANT TO
HURRY THIS UP?
I'D LIKE TO GET
OUTTA HERE AS
SOON AS WE CAN.
THIS PLACE
GIVES ME THE
CREEPS.

WHY
DOESN'T THE
CITY JUST PLOW
THIS DUMP OVER,
PUT UP ONE OF
THOSE NICE
SHOPPING MALLS?
EVEN ONE OF THEM
FIVE-DOLLAR-A-CUP
YUPPIE COFFEE
JOINTS WOULD
BE BETTER'N
THIS HELL
HOLE.

ASK ME,
THESE REJECTS
DID US ALL A
FAVOR. CAN'T
STAND THESE
LOSERS. ALWAYS
PANHANDLING,
PEEIN' IN THE STREET,
DIRTYIN' UP YOUR
WINDSHIELD.

AS FAR
AS I'M
CONCERNED,
THESE "BUMS"
AREN'T EVEN
PEOPLE.

"I MEAN,
WHAT KIND
OF *SICKO*
WOULD
ACTUALLY
CALL THIS
PLACE
HOME?"



FROM BEHIND THE BOARDED-UP WINDOWS, SPAWN SURVEYS THE CARNAGE. SUCH A WASTE. ALL THIS OVER WHO HAS CLAIM TO A WRETCHED PATCH OF NOTHING THAT MOST PEOPLE WOULDN'T EVEN SPIT ON.

THE STREWN, LIFELESS BODIES OF THOSE URBAN PARIAS LITTER THE GROUND LIKE SO MUCH REFUSE. NO NEXT OF KIN TO NOTIFY, NO MONEY FOR A PROPER BURIAL.

NOT THAT IT MATTERS MUCH. LT. COLONEL AL SIMMONS HAD A HERO'S FUNERAL, TV CAMERAS FOCUSING ON HIS FLAG-DRAPED COFFIN. IT DIDN'T DO HIM MUCH GOOD, DID IT?

HE PONDERES WHAT COG TOLD HIM EARLIER. THERE'S MORE TO THESE ALLEYS THAN HE HAD EVER BELIEVED. FOR BETTER OR WORSE, THEY ARE PART OF HIM NOW. THEY ARE HIS HOME.

AND, LIKE A SPIDER AT THE CENTER OF A GREAT WEB, HE CAN SENSE WHEN SOMETHING MAKES THE MISTAKE OF CROSSING INTO HIS DOMAIN.

YOO-HOO!
DEADBOY!

I KNEW YOU'D BE SKULKING AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE. JUST HAD TO FOLLOW THE STENCH OF **ROTTING MEAT**.

IT'S A WONDER YOU DON'T HAVE **DROOLING DOGS** CHASING AROUND AFTER YOU.

WHAT'S THE MATTER, **HELLSPAWN**? AREN'T YOU GOING TO **INVITE ME IN**?

I DON'T
KNOW WHO
YOU ARE, BUT
I SUGGEST
YOU TAKE A WALK
RIGHT NOW.
THERE'S BEEN
ENOUGH BLOOD
SPILLED TONIGHT.
I'D RATHER NOT
ADD YOURS
TO IT.

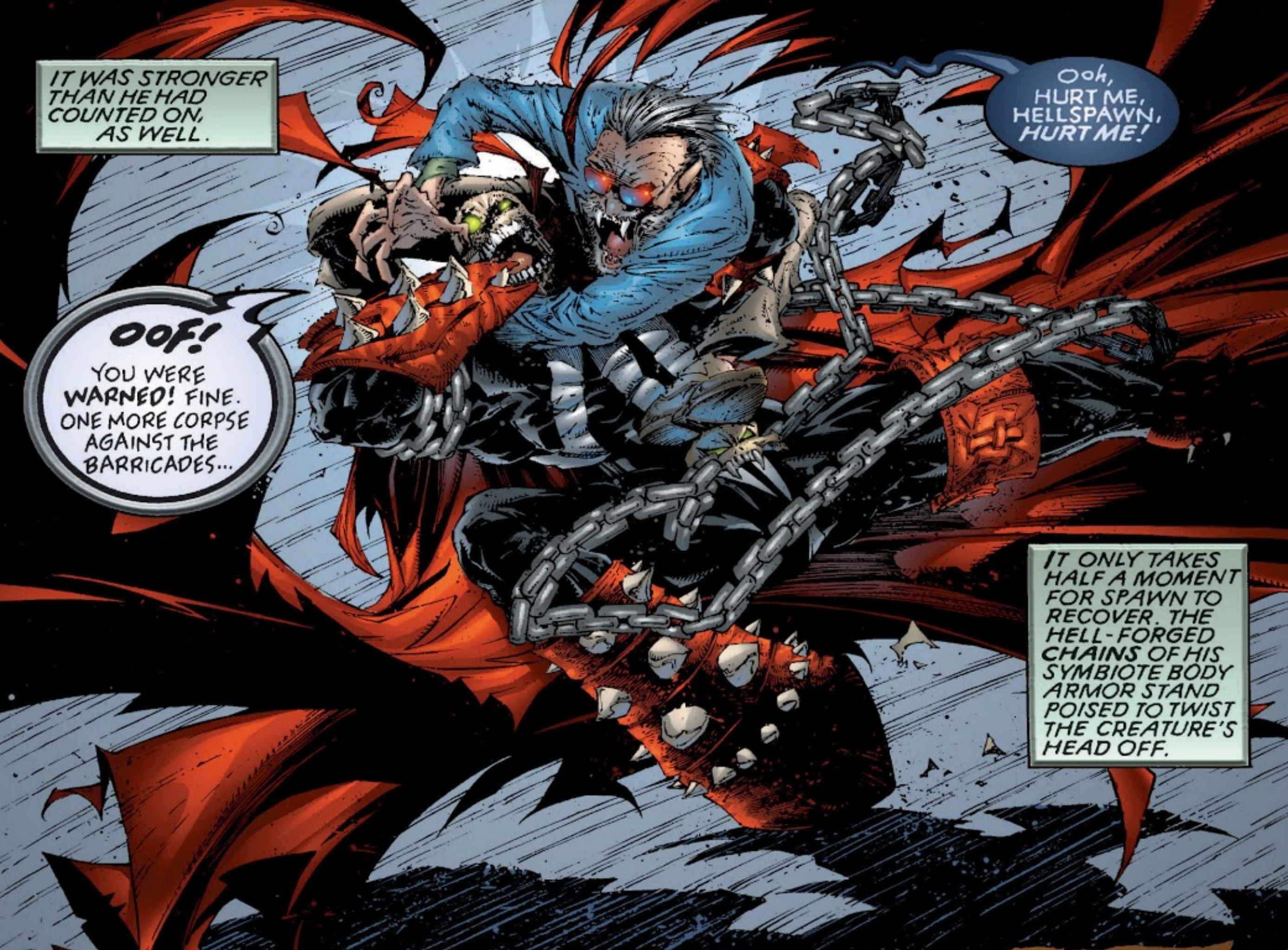
THIS IS
NOTHING.
PARIS DURING
THE REIGN OF
TERROR...
ST. PETERSBURG
BACK IN '17... *THOSE*
WERE PROPER BLOOD
BATHS. GUTTERS
RAN *RED* WITH
THE STUFF.

BEAUTIFUL, I
TELL YA. A SIGHT TA
SEE. MAKES ME KIND OF
MISTY JUST THINKING ABOUT
IT. *THIS* IS A DROP IN THE
OCEAN. BARELY A TRICKLE.
STILL, IT'S ENOUGH
TO WORK UP THE
THIRST.

KNOW
WHAT I
MEAN?

BLOODSHED?
HAH!

THE CREATURE MOVES
WITH BLINDING SPEED,
QUICK ENOUGH TO CATCH
THE SPAWN OFF-GUARD.



IT WAS STRONGER
THAN HE HAD
COUNTED ON,
AS WELL.

Ooh,
HURT ME,
HELLSPAWN,
HURT ME!

OOF!
YOU WERE
WARNED! FINE.
ONE MORE CORPSE
AGAINST THE
BARRICADES...

IT ONLY TAKES
HALF A MOMENT
FOR SPAWN TO
RECOVER. THE
HELL-FORGED
CHAINS OF HIS
SYMBIOTE BODY
ARMOR STAND
POISED TO TWIST
THE CREATURE'S
HEAD OFF.



BUT IT IS
HALF A MOMENT
TOO LATE.

WHOMP!

C'MON,
SPAWN!
LET ME
HAVE IT!

WHAT'S THE
MATTER? YOU'RE
GOING ALL *LIMP* ON
ME. OH WELL, DON'T
WORRY. I HEAR THAT
HAPPENS TO *EVERY*
ONE, ONCE IN
A WHILE.

GET
OFF
ME!



SINKING
IN NOW, IS IT?
WE JUST FELL INTO
THE "DEAD ZONE".
DIDN'T THAT *OLD*
MAN WARN YOU
ABOUT THIS?
OOPS.

A LONELY
PATCH OF
HEAVEN RIGHT
SMACK IN THE MIDDLE
OF ALL THIS *URBAN*
DECAY. ALL OF *HELL'S*
MINIONS ARE
POWERLESS
HERE.



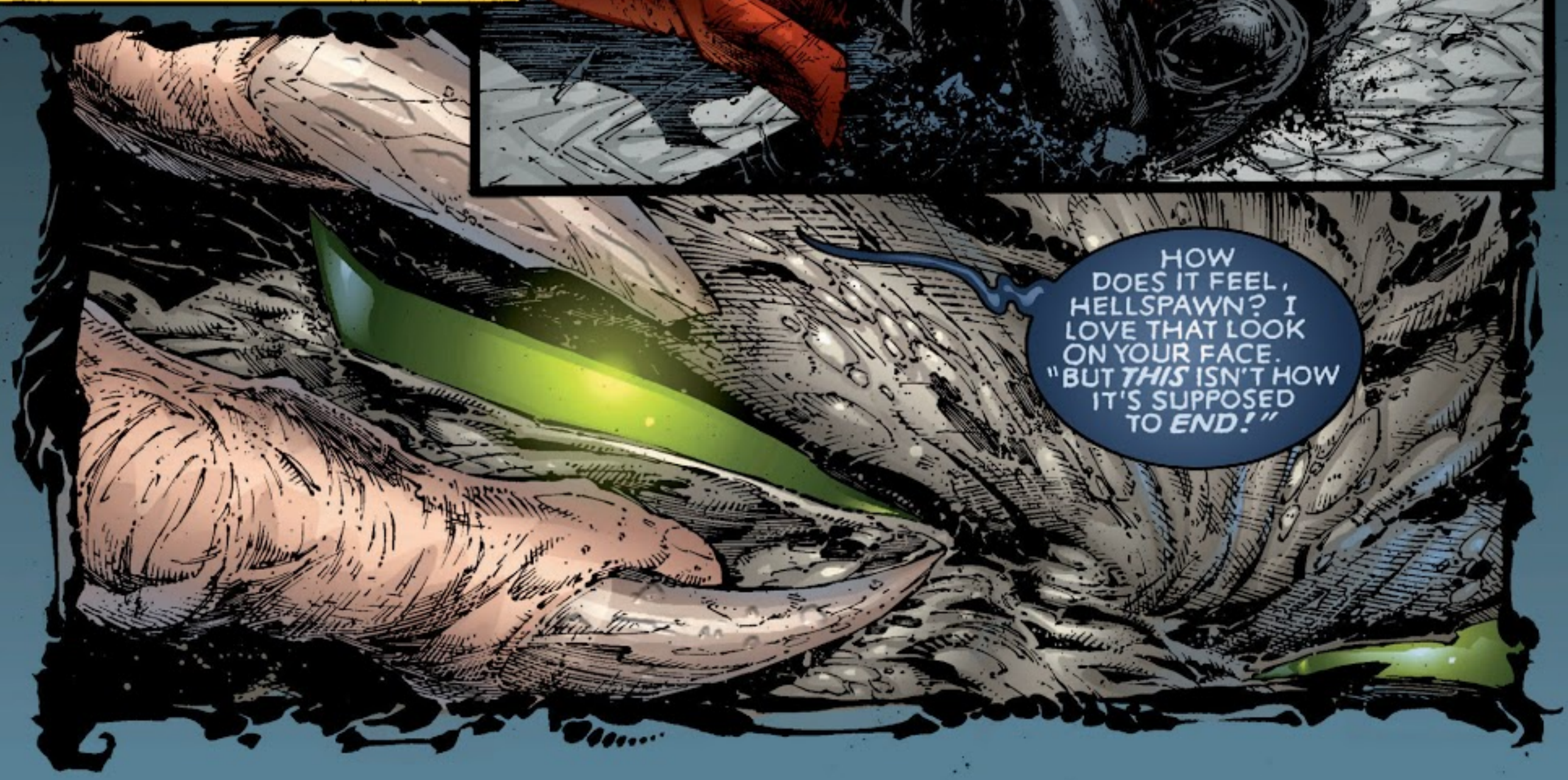
FEEL IT?
ALL THAT
POWER,
ALL THAT
MIGHT
LEAKING
OUT OF
YOU?



NO. NO.
YOU AIN'T
GOIN' NOWHERE.
SEE, I STILL HAVE
ALL *MY* STRENGTH.
AIN'T THAT A
KICKER?

YOU?
BUT
YOU'RE
A--

A VAMPIRE?
A BLOODSUCKER?
NOSFERATU? BINGO,
MEATFACE. BUT
THAT DOESN'T
MEAN WE'RE ON
THE *SAME*
TEAM.



HOW
DOES IT FEEL,
HELLSPAWN? I
LOVE THAT LOOK
ON YOUR FACE.
"BUT *THIS* ISN'T HOW
IT'S SUPPOSED
TO END!"



YOU
MAY BE
THE DEVIL'S
SLAVE,
BUT NOT
ME.

I'M BATTLING
FOR HIS
COMPETITION.

WHAT-?!

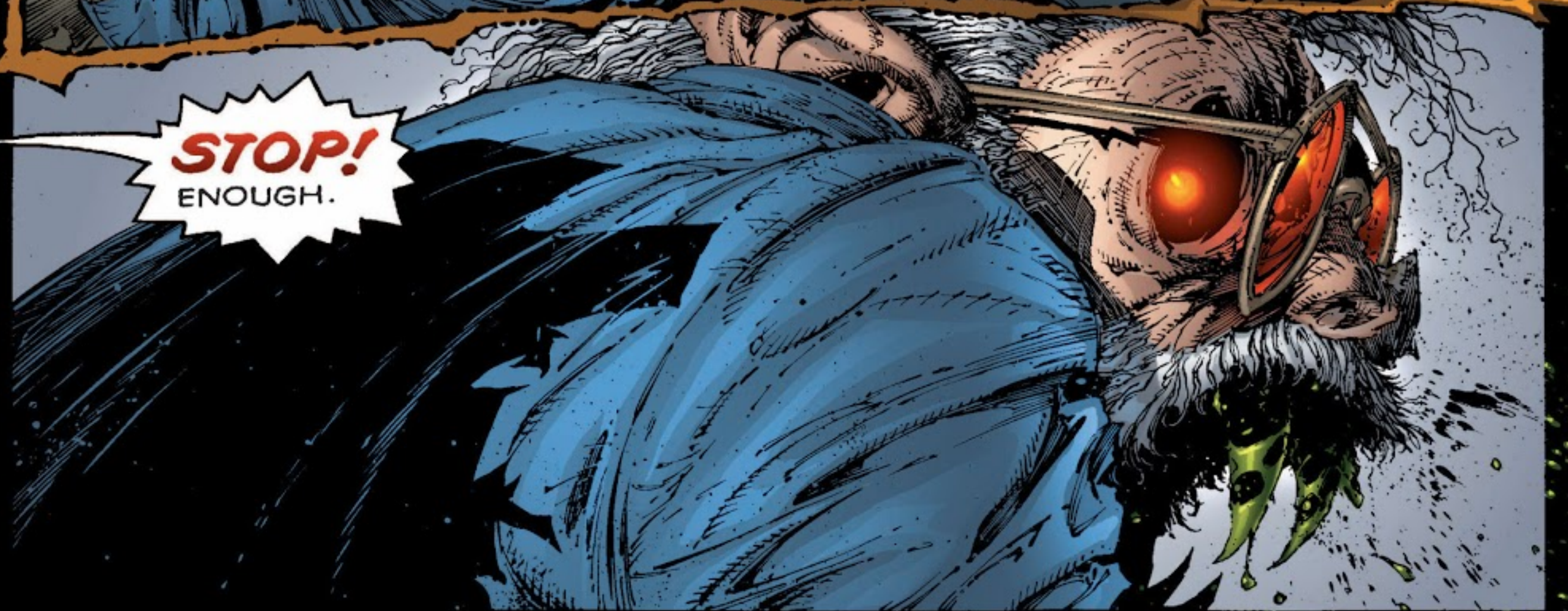


Oh, BY THE
WAY, JUST IN
CASE YOU'RE
WONDERING...



...THIS IS
GOING TO
HURT! A
LOT!

AAAGH!!



STOP!
ENOUGH.

CURB YOUR
BLOODLUST,
FIEND. YOU KNOW
YOU'RE NOT
SANCTIONED TO
*KILL ON THE
SPOT.*

BESIDES,
WHAT *GOOD*
IS HE TO US IF
YOU *DESTROY*
HIM?



TO BE
CONTINUED...



72

DIGITAL
EDITION

SPAWN



Capullo
97

McFarlane
CW

IMAGINE A NIGHT SO DEEP
THE SHADOWS BILLOW AND
SWIM AS IF ALIVE. AND THE
WIND, COLD AS THE FULL
MOON ABOVE, CARRIES
WITH IT A FAINT SCENT OF
BLOOD.

TONIGHT IS
SUCH A NIGHT.

AL...
YOU
OKAY?

IMAGINE A PLACE WHERE
HEAVEN AND HELL
CROSS PATHS IN THE
RAGGED SHADOWS OF
LONG ABANDONED
BUILDINGS.

WHERE DERELICT ANGELS
ROAM THE ALLEYWAYS
AMONG THRONGS OF
THE HOMELESS.

WHERE RENEGADE
VAMPIRES, IN HEAVEN'S
EMPLOY, ARE STATIONED.

AND WHERE HELL'S
ERRANT SOLDIER, A BEING
CALLED **SPAWN**, IS ONCE
AGAIN CAUGHT IN THE
CROSSFIRE.

THIS IS
SUCH A
PLACE.



IT HAS BEEN A NIGHT OF VIOLENT UPHEAVAL FOR SPAWN. A SHOW-DOWN WITH THE MADMAN KNOWN AS THE FREAK... A GANG WAR AMONG THE DENIZENS OF RATCITY*...

... AND HE HAS JUST NOW ENDURED THE RABID ATTACK OF A VAMPIRE, ONLY TO SEE THE CREATURE CALLED OFF BY THE MYSTERIOUS VAGA-BOND KNOWN AS BOOTSY.**

* SPAWN 68-70.
** LAST ISSUE.

JUST TAKE IT EASY THERE, BIG GUY. EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE OKAY...

BOOTSY?

WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON, BOOTSY? DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT THING IS?

YES, I KNOW. AND HE WON'T HURT YOU. I WILL SEE TO IT.

YOU AND I, WE NEED TO TALK. AND THERE'S NOT MUCH TIME.

HEY, I COULDN'T HELP MYSELF. *FULL MOON* AND ALL.

GEE, LOOKS LIKE THE OLD RADIATOR SPRUNG A LEAK THERE, HELLSPAWN.

GET OUT OF THE WAY, BOOTSY. I'M SENDING THIS DEGENERATE BACK TO HELL.

BRING IT ON, *MEAT-BOY!* MAYBE THERE'S NO *BLOOD* IN YOUR VEINS, BUT I'M STILL GONNA GET A KICK OUT OF BRINGING YOU DOWN!

ENOUGH!



STOP IT!

I COMMAND YOU. THIS IS A **HOLY PLACE**, WOLFRAM. YOU OWE ALLEGIANCE TO THE **SHINING CITY**! YOU WILL DO WHAT I SAY.

"SHINING CITY"? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?



YOU DIDN'T KNOW? OL' BOOTSY'S GOT A **HALO** HIDDEN UNDER HIS CAP, DON'T'CHA? BUT HE AIN'T NO **SAINT**.

YEAH, I GOT YOUR NUMBER, BOOTSY. YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO INTERFERE WITH **MORTALS**, BUT I KNOW YOU SAVED THAT **BUM'S LIFE**. *

THEY'RE GONNA HAUL YOUR SELF-RIGHTEOUS ASS BEFORE THE **SERAPHIC TRIBUNAL**, AND THEN WE'LL SEE WHO'S GIVING ORDERS.



I AM NOT AFRAID TO ANSWER FOR MY ACTIONS. BUT FOR NOW I AM STILL THE RANKING **EMISSARY** AND YOU WILL DO WHAT YOU ARE TOLD.



DON'T WORRY. I CAN BIDE MY TIME. THE DAY IS COMING, MY FRIEND...



AND THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO. THE RANKS OF MY KIND ARE *LEGION*, JUST WAITING IN THE NIGHT TO STRIKE.

THERE'S AN ARMY ON THE MARCH, KIDS. JUST WAIT AND SEE.



I DON'T INTEND ON WAITING. WE CAN FINISH THIS NOW.



Oook, TOUGH GUY. WHY SO HOSTILE, SPAWN? YOU AND ME, WE'RE CUT FROM THE SAME ROTTEN CLOTH.

I AM **NOTHING** LIKE YOU.

UNDEAD, CURSED TO WALK THE EARTH, SKULKING IN SHADOWS? NONE OF THAT RINGS A BELL? GUESS I GOT THE WRONG GUY.



BACK OFF.

OF COURSE, UNLIKE YOU, I WEAR THE *MARK OF HEAVEN*. AND AIN'T THE ONLY ONE.

HELL, THERE'S A WHOLE NEST OF THEM DOWN BY THE BOWERY. NOW, THAT'S A SCENE THAT'LL MAKE YOUR FLESH CRAWL. IF YOU HAD ANY FLESH, THAT IS.



"THE WAY I SEE IT, SPAWN, HEAVEN'S GIVEN ME AND MINE A LICENSE TO *KILL*. AND WE'RE GOING TO *USE* IT."

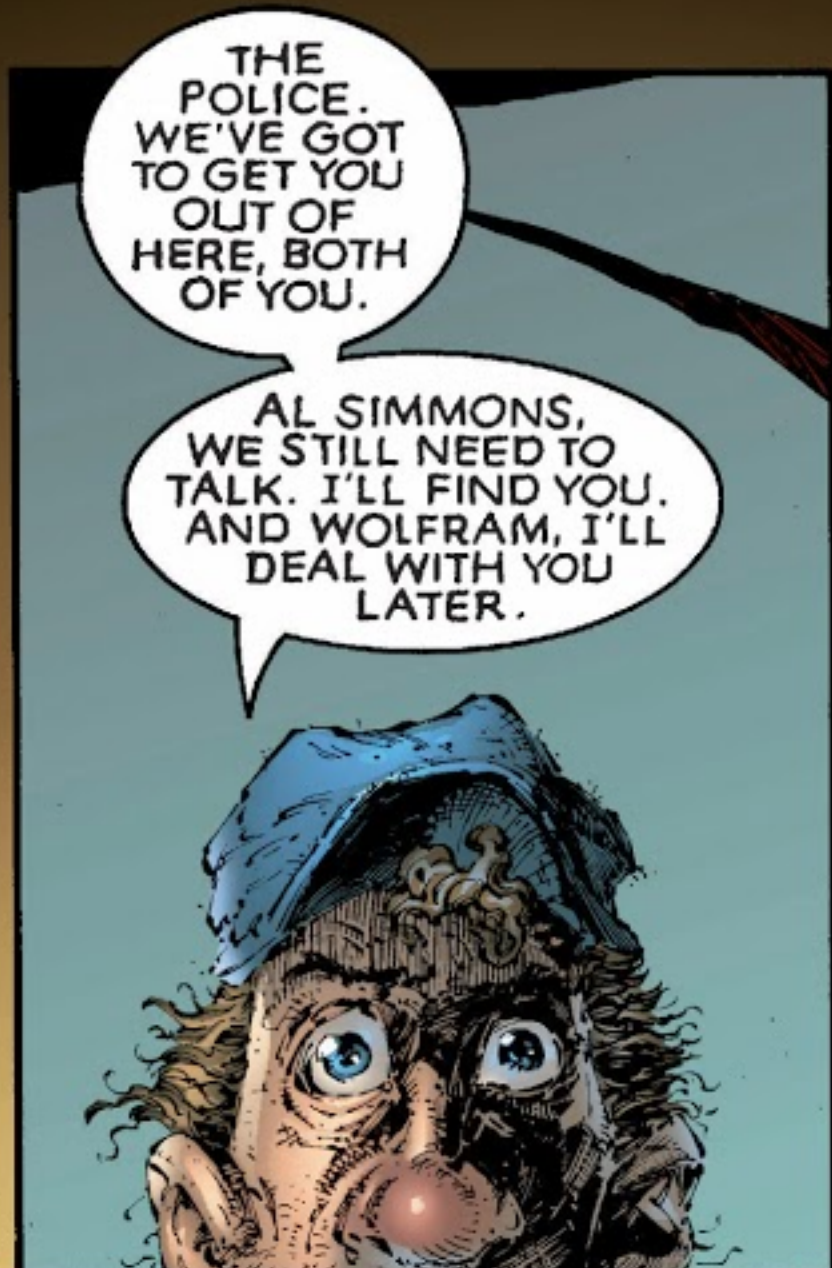


"THAT'S ENOUGH, WOLFRAM. YOUR MANDATE IS CLEARLY DEFINED."



AW
JEEZ,
BOOTSY,
YOU'RE
NO--

WAIT.
SOMEONE'S
COMING. I
CAN SMELL
IT.



THE
POLICE.
WE'VE GOT
TO GET YOU
OUT OF
HERE, BOTH
OF YOU.

AL SIMMONS,
WE STILL NEED TO
TALK. I'LL FIND YOU.
AND WOLFRAM, I'LL
DEAL WITH YOU
LATER.



SEE YOU
AROUND,
SPAWN.

NOT IF
I SEE YOU
FIRST.

POOF!



THIS
IS ALL
TURNING
OUT
BADLY.

"IF I'M NOT CAREFUL, THIS COULD ALL BLOW UP IN MY FACE."

WHAMP!

FREEZE.

POLICE!

KA-KLACK

PEACE BE WITH YOU, OFFICERS.

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? WE HAD REPORTS OF A DISTURBANCE?

I'M SORRY, OFFICER. 'FRAID THAT MUSTA BEEN ME. SEE, SOMETIMES I HAVE TROUBLE SLEEPING. I CRY OUT IN MY SLEEP. I DIDN'T MEAN TO BOTHER NO ONE.

LIKELY STORY, PAL. I WANT YOU PLANTED THERE LIKE A LAMPPOST. KEEP THOSE HANDS UP. BOYS, DO A PERIMETER SWEEP.



ARE YOU SURE YOU WOULDN'T RATHER I TYPED, SIR?

NAH, I GOT IT. HOW MANY "P"'S IN "DECAPITATED"?



ONE, SIR.

I CAN'T GET THE IMAGE OF THAT POOR GIRL OUT OF MY MIND.*

I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN. IT'S BEEN ONE LONG, UNBELIEVABLY MESSED-UP NIGHT. I'LL BE GLAD WHEN IT'S OVER.

*LAST ISSUE.



'SCUSE ME, LADIES. GOT A VISITOR HERE WANTS TO TALK TO YOU. SAYS HIS NAME IS BOOBIE.

BOOTS.

WHATEVER. YOU GOT ONE MINUTE.



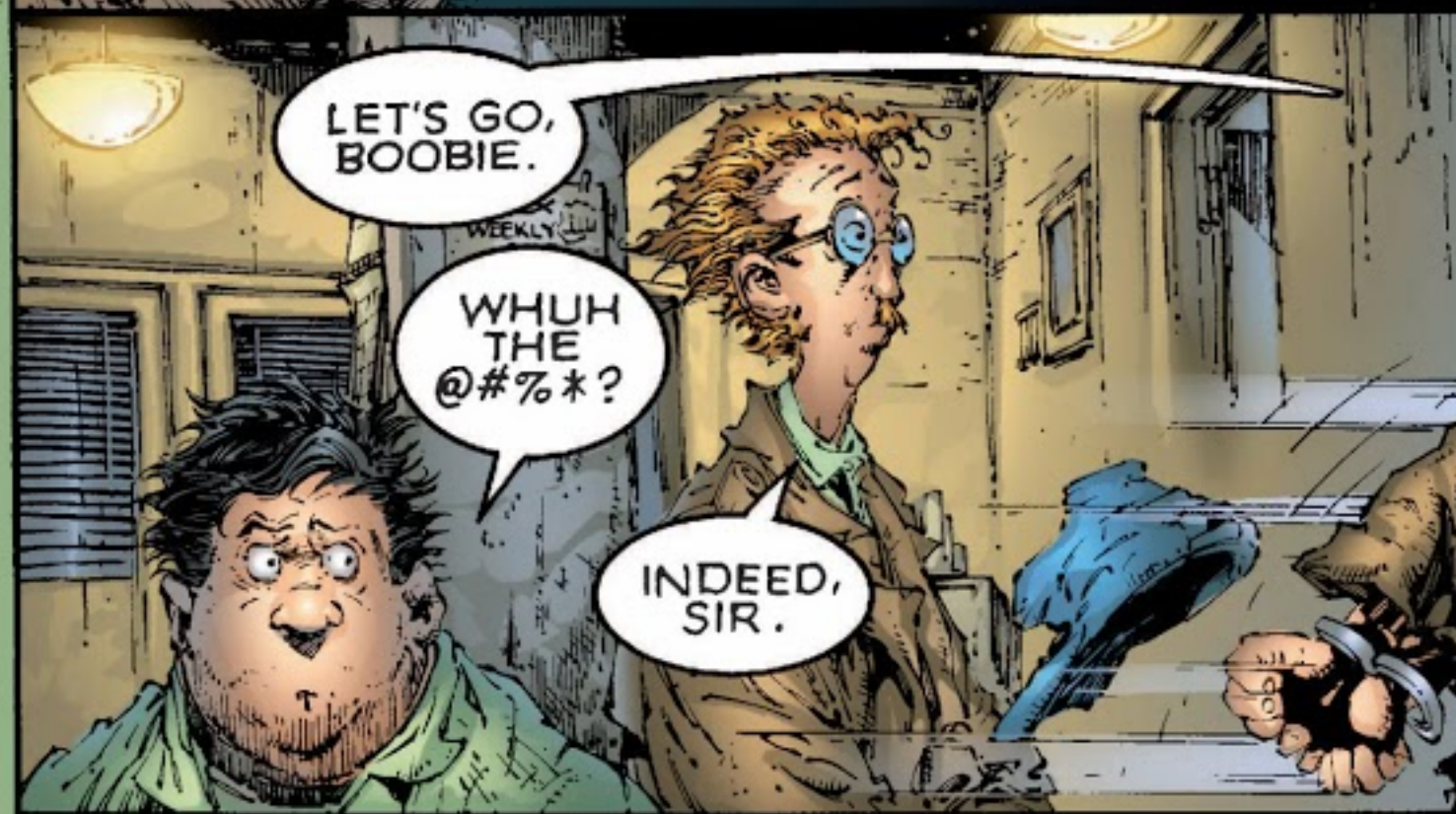
I DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME AND I SHOULDN'T BE SAYING **ANYTHING**. BUT PLEASE LISTEN CLOSELY.

THE STAKES ARE ABOUT TO BE RAISED AND THE HELLSPAWN IS GOING TO NEED YOU. AND **YOU'RE** GOING TO NEED **HIM**.



I'M TAKING A GREAT RISK GETTING INVOLVED. BUT IN THE **BIG PICTURE**, IT'S VERY IMPORTANT THAT SPAWN SURVIVE WHAT'S COMING AHEAD.

YOU MUST SEE THAT HE DOES...



LET'S GO, BOOBIE.

WHUH THE @#%*?

INDEED, SIR.



SCRAPS.
THAT'S
ALL WE
GOT,
PAL.

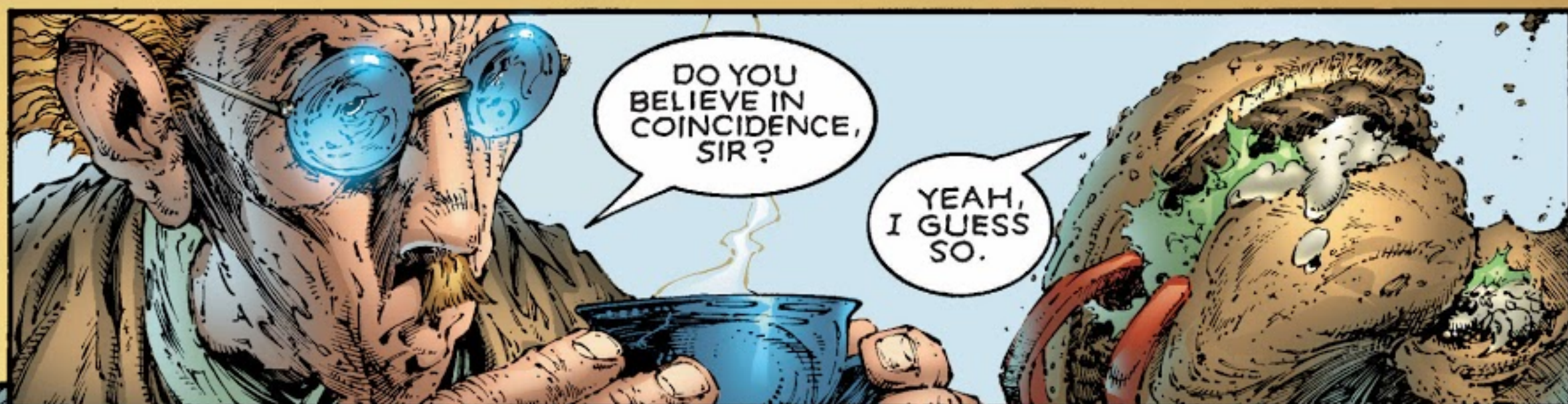
SCRAPS OF
INFO, MOST OF
IT CONFLICTING,
AND NONE OF
IT MAKING ANY
SENSE WHEN
YA PUT IT TO-
GETHER.



PERHAPS WE'VE
BEEN GOING ABOUT
IT WRONG. I'VE BEEN
THINKING ABOUT WHAT
THAT GENTLEMAN
SAID BACK AT THE
PRECINCT, SIR.

ABOUT
THE "BIG
PICTURE".

ALL'S I
KNOW IS
WE GOTTA GET
A CASE THAT
PAYS, AND
SOON. **THAT'S**
THE BIG
PICTURE.



DO YOU
BELIEVE IN
COINCIDENCE,
SIR?

YEAH,
I GUESS
SO.



WELL, I
THINK WE'RE
LOOKING AT
SOMETHING
THAT'S FAR TOO
COMPLEX TO BE
COINCIDENCE.
LET'S START
AT THE
BEGINNING...





CHIEF BANKS,
BILLY KINCAID,
VITO GRAVANO,
JASON WYNN, THE
OLD MAN COG...

...RAT CITY,
THE FREAK,
THE GANG WAR,
EVEN THAT
GENTLEMAN
NAMED
BOOTS...

RIGHT...



A
NUMBER OF
ADMITTEDLY
LURID, BUT
SEEMINGLY
SEPARATE,
EVENTS.

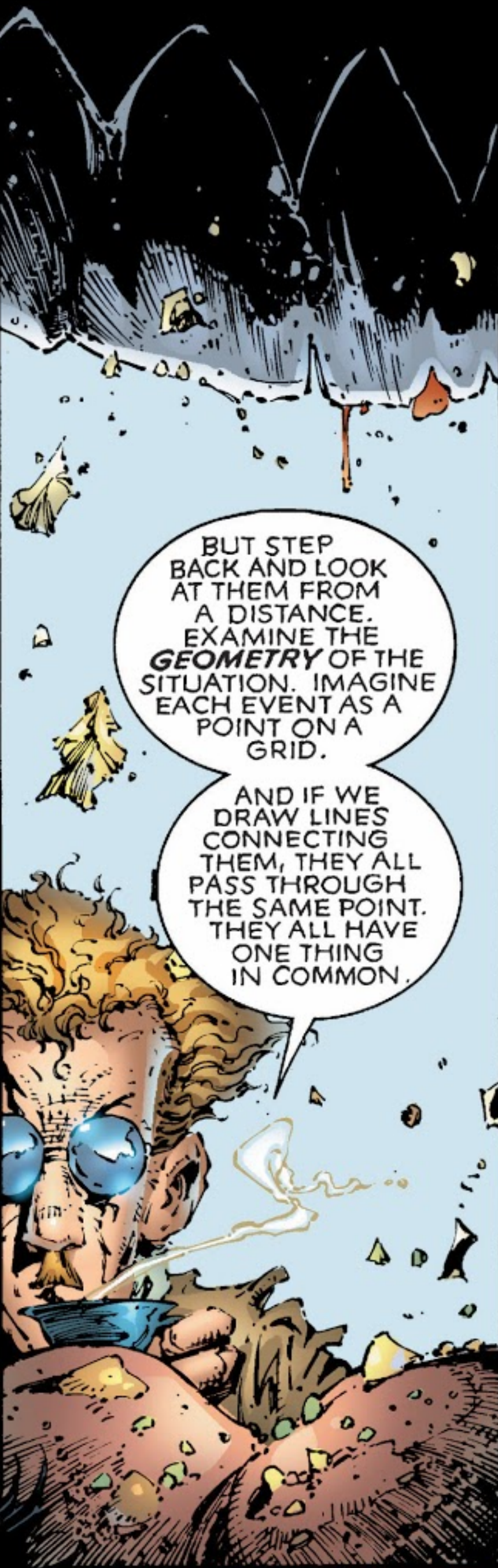
YEAH, I'M
FOLLOWING
YOU.

SPAWN.

YES.
AND WHO
ELSE?

US... I
GET YOUR
MEANING, TWITCH.
JEEZUS, THIS
COULD BE THE
CASE OF THE
CENTURY.

STILL
BELIEVE IN
COINCIDENCE,
SIR?



BUT STEP
BACK AND LOOK
AT THEM FROM
A DISTANCE.
EXAMINE THE
GEOMETRY OF THE
SITUATION. IMAGINE
EACH EVENT AS A
POINT ON A
GRID.

AND IF WE
DRAW LINES
CONNECTING
THEM, THEY ALL
PASS THROUGH
THE SAME POINT.
THEY ALL HAVE
ONE THING
IN COMMON.



HIS STAY AT THE SHELTER ENDED THREE DAYS AGO. SAID HE WASN'T MAKING ENOUGH OF AN "EFFORT".

TOSSED OUT ON THE STREET LIKE SO MUCH REFUSE. YESTERDAY'S NEWS.

JUST ANOTHER SAD, PATHETIC TURN IN THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL OF EDDIE BECKETT.

SCREW 'EM, HE SAYS. ALL THEM BASTARDS. WHO ARE THEY TO JUDGE?

IT'S NOT HIS FAULT THAT HIS WIFE GOT CANCER. OR THAT THE HMOS WOULDN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT 'TIL IT WAS TOO LATE.

OR THAT HE GOT TOO SAUCED AFTER THE FUNERAL AND RAN HEAD-ON INTO A FAMILY COMING HOME FROM CONEY ISLAND... OR THAT THE DAMN LAWYERS BLEED HIS LAST DIME.

HE USED TO DREAM ABOUT A HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY, A PRIVATE JET. NOW ALL HE HOPES FOR IS A WARM PLACE TO SLEEP, AND SOMETHING HALF-WAY EDIBLE OUT OF A DUMPSTER.



FUNNY
HOW YOUR
PRIORITIES
CHANGE.

HE CATCHES IT
OUT OF THE
CORNER OF HIS
EYE. JUST A
BROWN PAPER
PACKAGE.
NOTHING
SPECIAL. BUT
SOMEHOW
IT CALLS OUT
TO HIM.

MAYBE A STASH
OF CASH SOME
GANGSTER LEFT
BEHIND. OR
MAYBE A BAG OF
JEWELS DROPPED
IN A HEIST.

HELL,
MAYBE IT'S
SOMEONE'S
TAKE-OUT
THAT HASN'T
GONE BAD
YET.

Hmm...?



EWV.

IT SMELLS
VILE. LIKE
THE INSIDE
OF A
SLAUGHTER-
HOUSE.



WHAT
THE HELL
IS THIS
CRAP?

NECROPLASM.

A BAGFUL OF
CONGEALED SIN,
INTENDED AS THE
FREAK'S TROPHY
FROM HIS
ENCOUNTER WITH
THE SPAWN. *

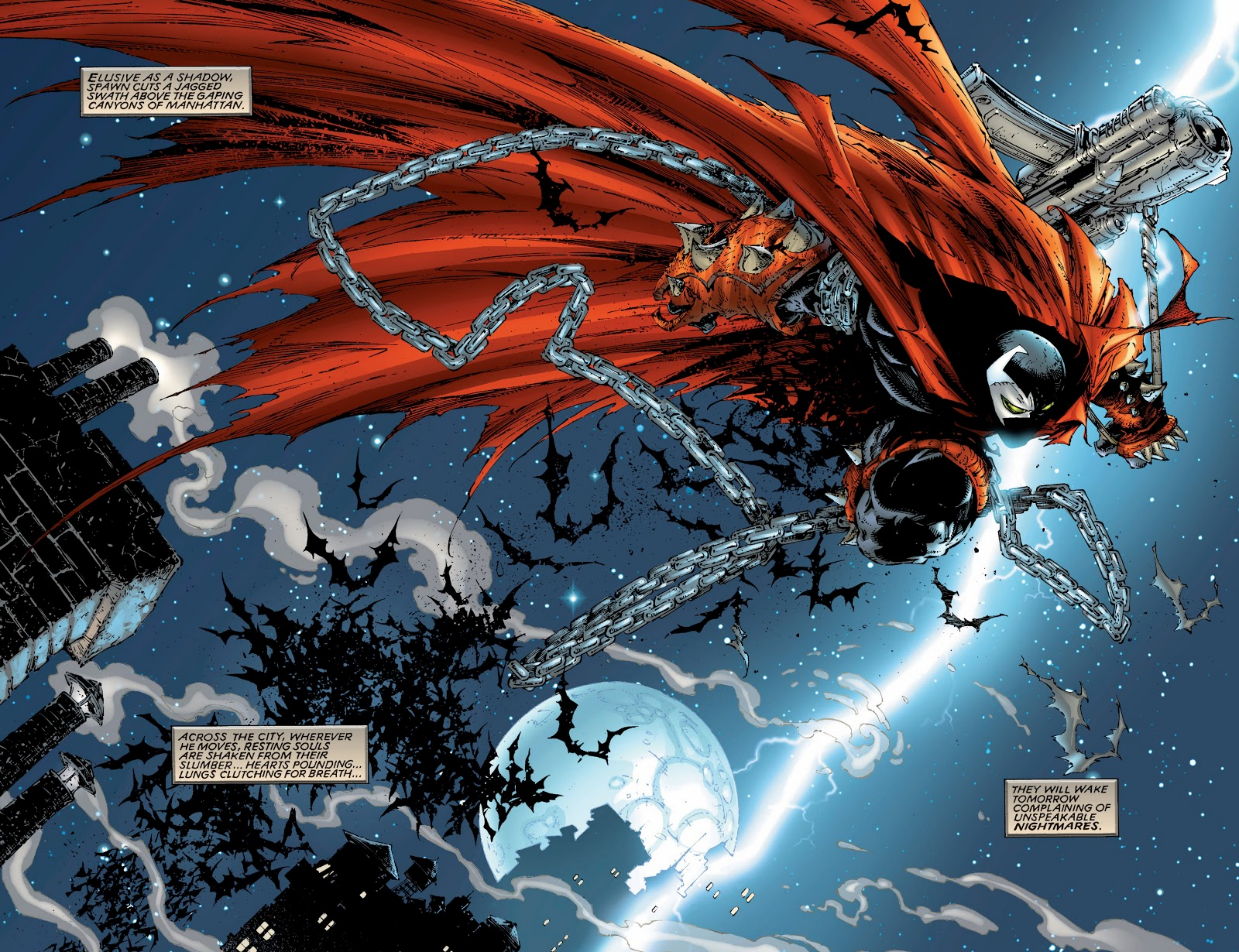
* SPAWN
6B.



EDDIE CURSES HIS
LUCK. HE SHOULD HAVE
KNOWN BETTER THAN
TO HOPE. THINGS ARE
NEVER GOING TO
CHANGE FOR HIM.

NOTHIN'.

HOW
COULD
HE
KNOW?

A full-page comic book illustration of Spawn flying over Manhattan at night. He is wearing his signature red cape and black suit, with his wings spread wide. He is carrying a large, complex mechanical device, possibly a tank or a large gun, in his arms. The device is silver and black, with various pipes and a large barrel. The city below is dark, with some lights visible from buildings. A large, full moon is in the sky, and there are many small, dark, bat-like creatures flying around. The overall tone is dark and ominous.

ELUSIVE AS A SHADOW,
SPAWN CUTS A JAGGED
SWATH ABOVE THE GAPING
CANYONS OF MANHATTAN.

ACROSS THE CITY, WHEREVER
HE MOVES, RESTING SOULS
ARE SHAKEN FROM THEIR
SLUMBER... HEARTS POUNDING...
LUNGS CLUTCHING FOR BREATH...

THEY WILL WAKE
TOMORROW
COMPLAINING OF
UNSPEAKABLE
NIGHTMARES.



DAMN!
HE KICKED
ME!
**HOLD
HIM
STILL!**

**RELEASE
THE
CHILD!**

**KEER-
AASH!**

WHAT
THE--?

I DON'T
KNOW WHO
THE HELL
YOU ARE,
BUT YOU
CRASHED
THE WRONG
PARTY!

HIT THE
LIGHTS,
GENTLE-
MEN.

SKLNG!

**IT'S
SHOW
TIME!**

BAD MOVE.
NOW... I'M GOING
TO COUNT TO
THREE.

YOU'RE
DEAD
MEAT!

ONE...

THE DARKNESS
RINGS OUT WITH
THE PEAL OF
GUNFIRE AND
THE SNAP OF
BREAKING
BONES...

GUNPOWDER FLASH
ILLUMINATES THE
ROOM LIKE A
STROBE LIGHT...
CONSTRICTED
THROATS CRY OUT
A CHORUS OF
UNHOLY SOUNDS...

KERRACK!

TWO...

DAMN
IT! I'M
HIT!

WHERE
THE HELL
IS HE?

BLAM
BLAM
BLAMM!

BLAM
BLAM!

BLAM!

OVER
THERE,
BY THE
WALL!

NO,
THAT'S
ME!

TO
YOUR
LEFT,
TO YOUR
LEFT!



THREE.





EASY THERE, SON. IT'S OVER.

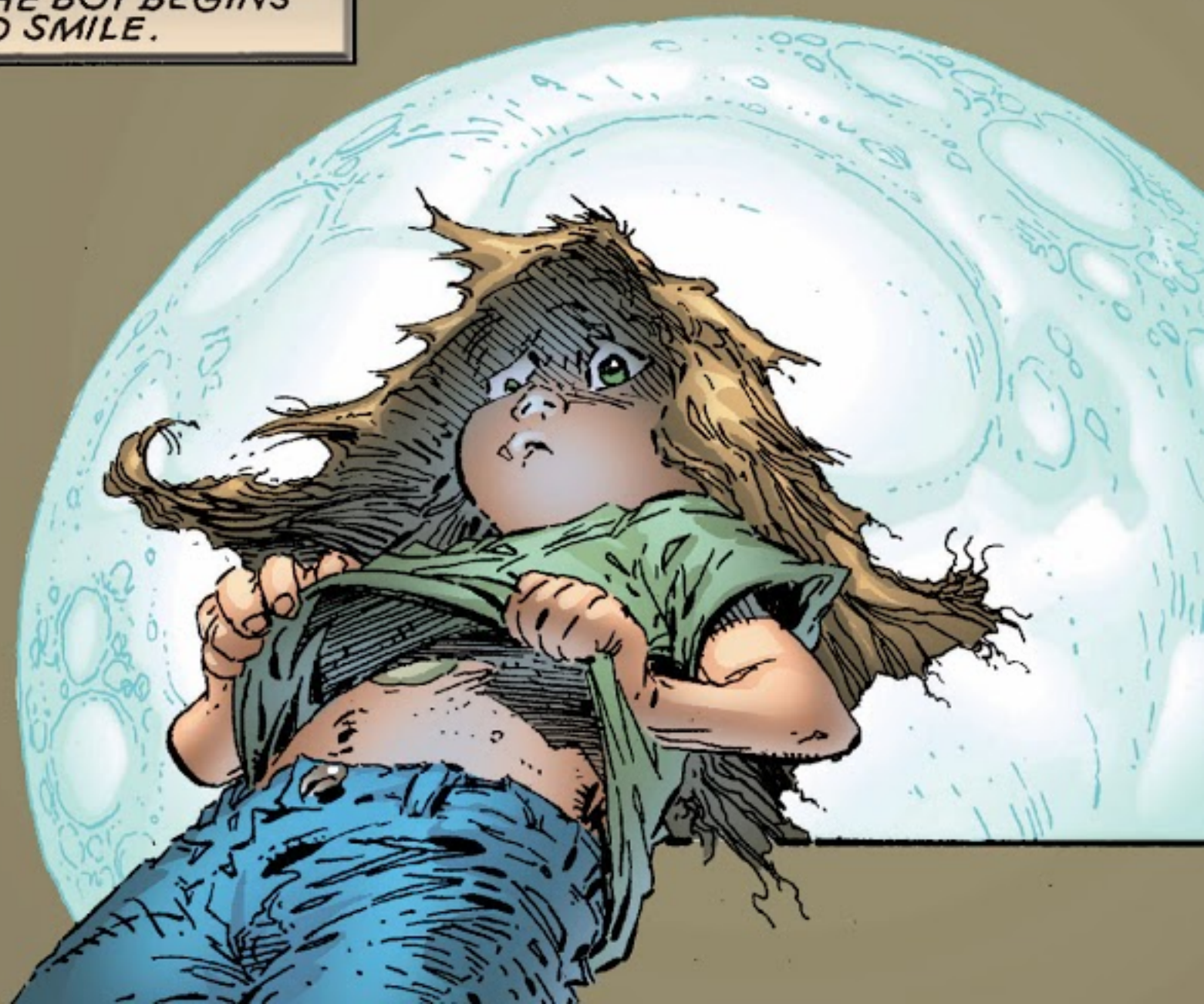
YOU GOT A HOME TO GO TO?

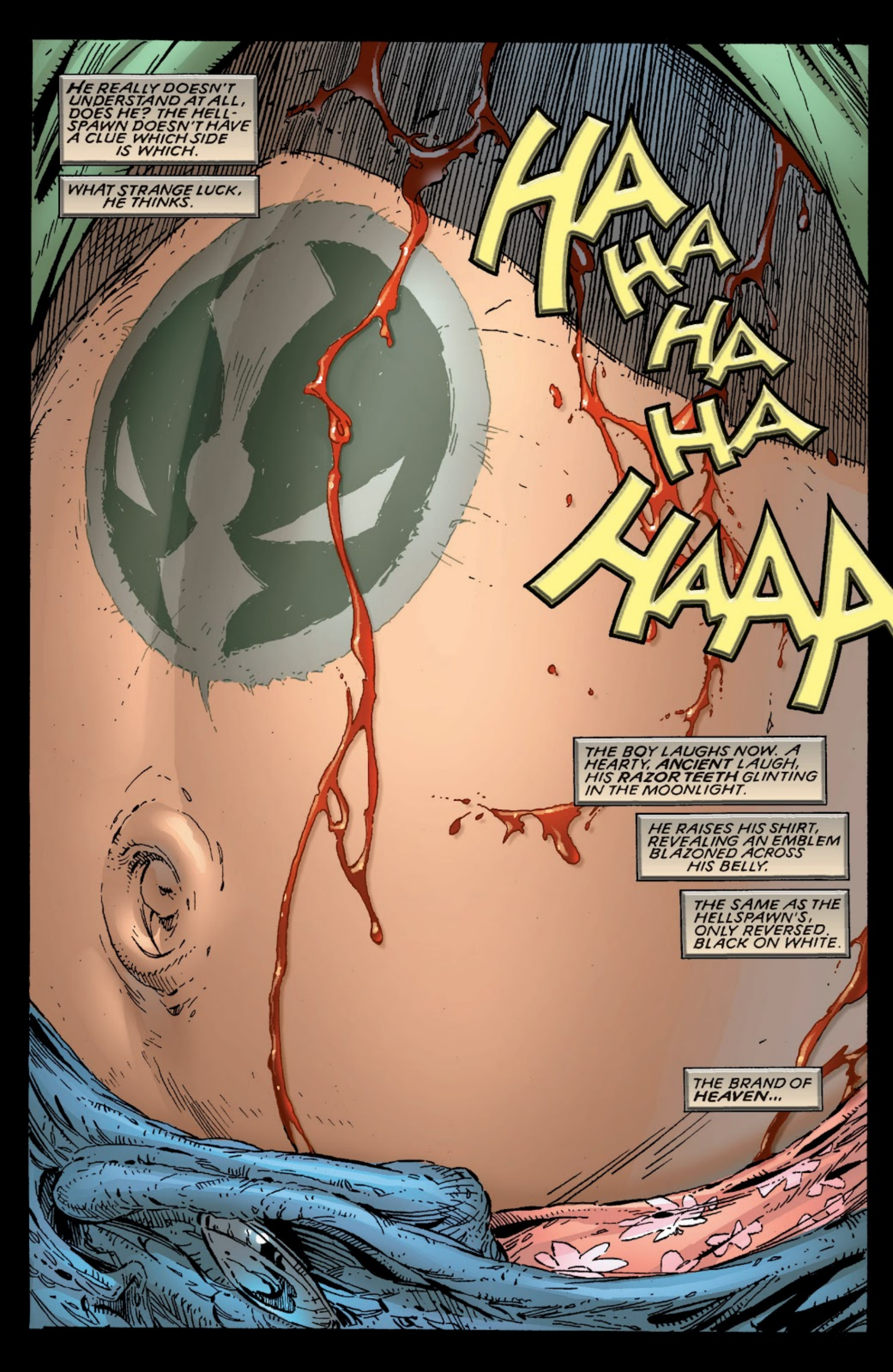
Mmm-hmm.



THEN GO THERE. NOW.

AS HE WATCHES SPAWN DISAPPEAR INTO THE NIGHT, THE BOY BEGINS TO SMILE.





HE REALLY DOESN'T UNDERSTAND AT ALL, DOES HE? THE HELL-SPAWN DOESN'T HAVE A CLUE WHICH SIDE IS WHICH.

WHAT STRANGE LUCK, HE THINKS.

HA
HA
HA
HA
HA

THE BOY LAUGHS NOW. A HEARTY, ANCIENT LAUGH, HIS RAZOR TEETH GLINTING IN THE MOONLIGHT.

HE RAISES HIS SHIRT, REVEALING AN EMBLEM BLAZONED ACROSS HIS BELLY.

THE SAME AS THE HELLSPAWN'S, ONLY REVERSED. BLACK ON WHITE.

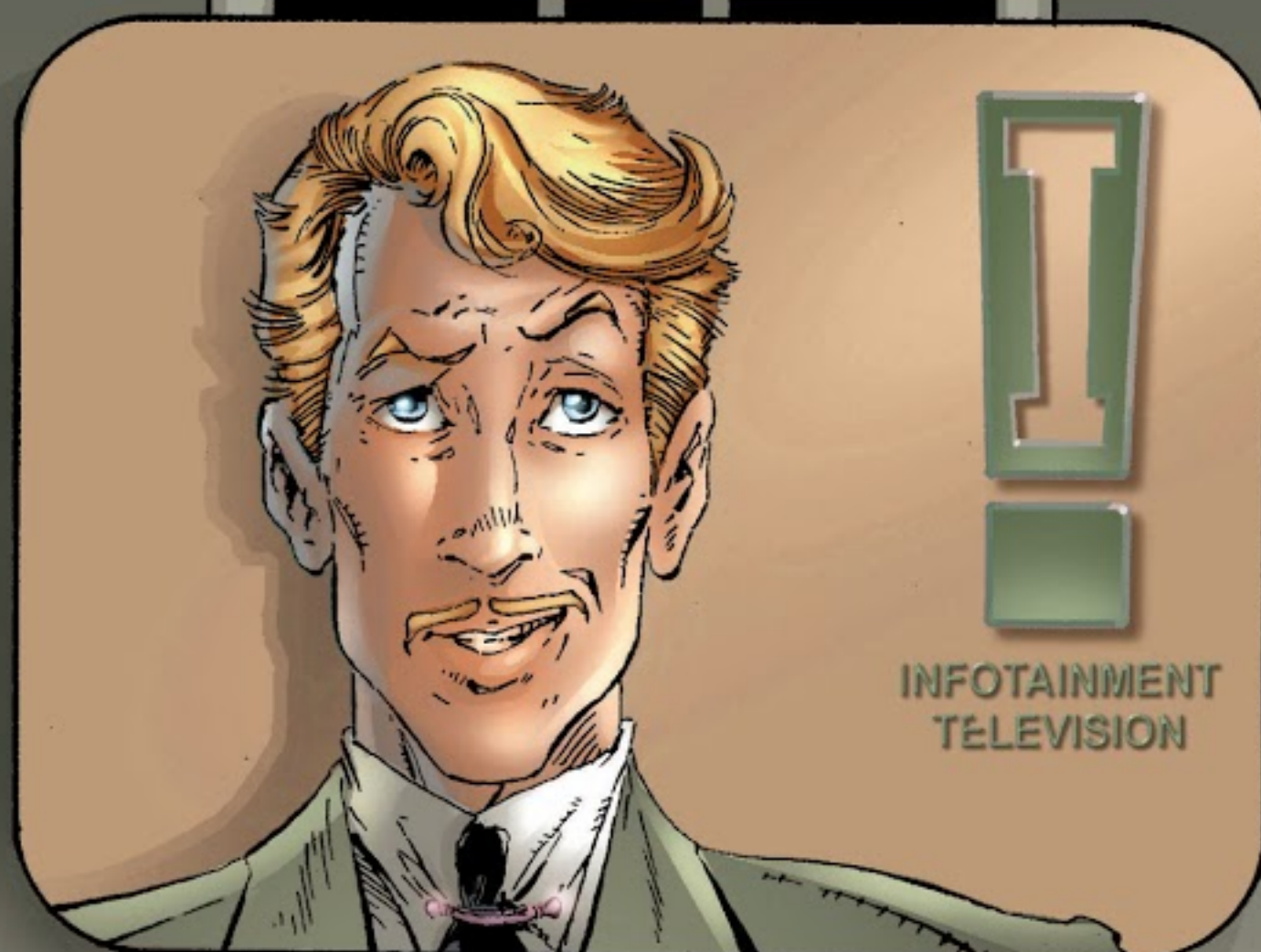
THE BRAND OF HEAVEN...



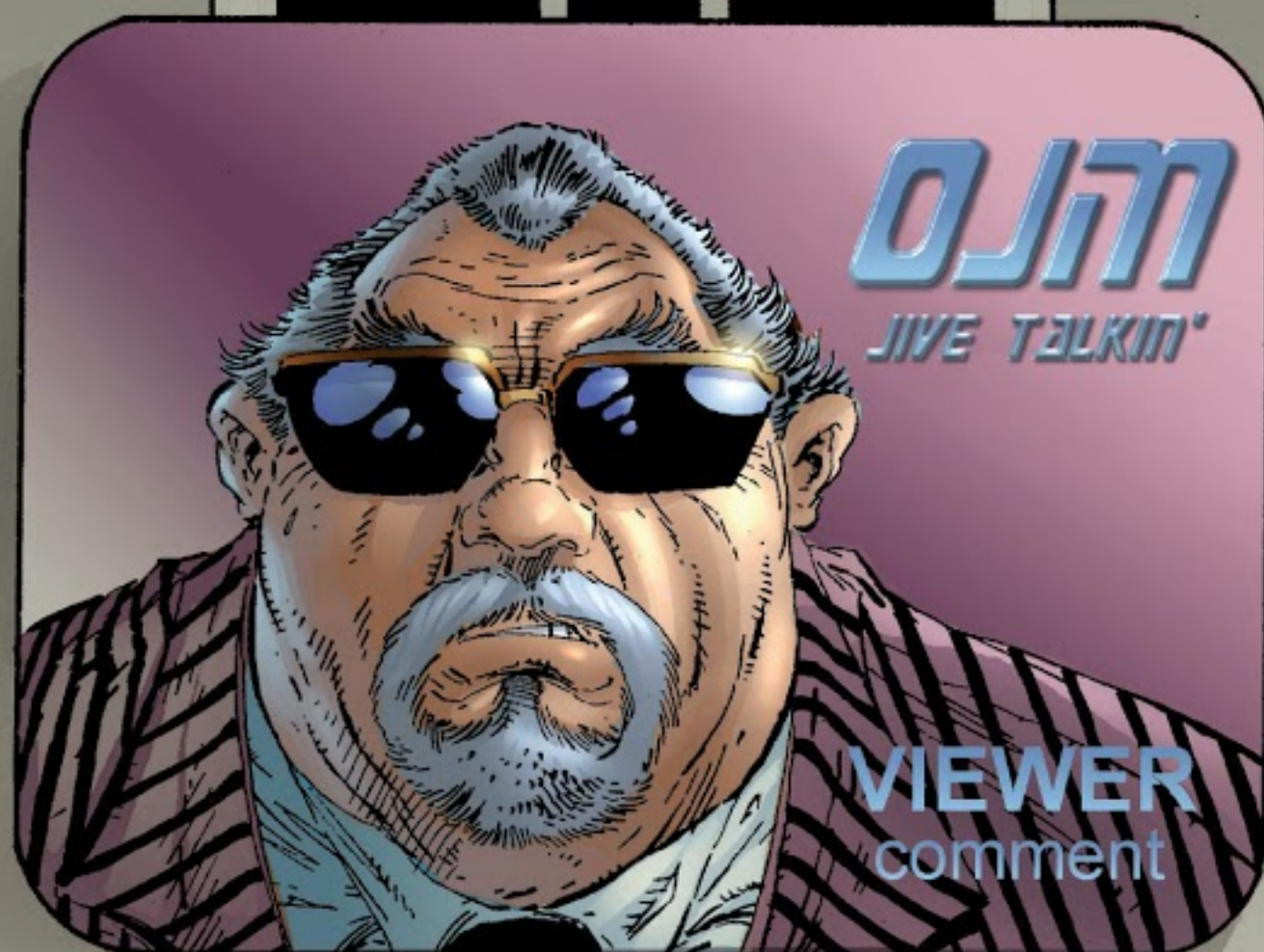
...ARE STILL LOOKING FOR A MOTIVE BEHIND WHAT IS BEING CALLED "A DISTURBING OUTBREAK OF VIOLENCE" AMONG NEW YORK'S HOMELESS POPULATION.

THE APPARENT "TURF WAR" ERUPTED LATE LAST NIGHT BETWEEN WHAT APPEARS TO BE WARRING FACTIONS OF HOMELESS PERSONS WHO RESIDE IN THE BLIGHTED AREA OF MANHATTAN COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS "RAT CITY".

POLICE ARE ESTIMATING FATALITIES TO BE AS HIGH AS 40 AND ARE QUESTIONING SURVIVORS AS TO WHAT MAY HAVE SPURRED SUCH VIOLENCE.



SWANK NEW YORKERS IN THE KNOW ARE FLOCKING TO AN *NEW* DESTINATION. CONVENIENT TO THE CHALK LINES THE POLICE HAVE DRAWN AROUND THE RECENT TURF WAR VICTIMS, IT'S A BIT OF URBAN DECADENCE CALLED *THE RAT'S ASS*. THE SMALL CLUB IS LOCATED IN, WE'RE ASSURED, POSITIVELY THE *LAST* UNDISCOVERED CORNER OF THE BOWERY'S "RAT CITY" DISTRICT. THE BAR DOESN'T EVEN *OPEN* UNTIL 2 A.M., CLOSES HALF AN HOUR BEFORE SUNRISE, AND IS CUNNINGLY DECORATED IN "EARLY HOPELESSNESS AND DESPAIR". IT MUST BE TAPPING INTO SOME *FIN DE SIECLE* ANGST, BECAUSE LINES ROUTINELY FORM AROUND THE BLOCK, EVEN ON WEEKNIGHTS. BRUSH UP ON YOUR LEO GORCEY AND WEAR YOUR DIRTY CLOTHES IN LAYERS. MURDEROUS INTENTIONS ARE WELCOME BUT PURELY OPTIONAL.



THAT ODD *GLOW* IN THE SKY LAST WEEK? YES, THAT WAS INDEED A *FULL MOON*. BESIDES THE USUAL INCREASES IN CRIME AND HOOLIGANISM, THIS TIME IT BROUGHT WITH IT A REMARKABLE EXPLOSION OF VIOLENCE IN THAT LITTLE BIT OF HEAVEN WE CALL "RAT CITY". FOR YEARS, EL RATSO HAD BEEN OUR CATCH-ALL BLIGHT, A PLAYGROUND FOR DRUG ADDICTS, MOBSTERS, HOOKERS, AND THE FOLKS WHO COULDN'T AFFORD TO STAY IN THE FLOPHOUSES. WHAT FINALLY BROUGHT THIS MIX TO A *BOIL*? THERE WAS NO BENEFIT FOR *ANYBODY*. MY BOOKIE NEVER EVEN CALLED ME WITH THE ODDS. WELL, JUST AS NIGHT'S CHILDREN BAY AT THE MOON, EVEN I GOTTA ADMIT THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT THOSE OF US CAUGHT BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL WILL *NEVER* UNDERSTAND.





73

DIGITAL
EDITION

SPAWN





SONUVA BITCH!

WHY DID THIS
HAVE TO HAPPEN
TO **US?!?**

IT AIN'T
FAIR!

WHAM!
WHAMP!

SIR, YOU'RE
OVERREACTING.
IT'S ONLY A
MINOR RUFFLE.
THERE ARE OTHER
AVENUES
AVAILABLE
TO US.

WE DO HAVE
OPTIONS.



Ulp!:-
YOU
MEAN--?

YES, SIR.
THE
STAIRS.

I WILL
TELEPHONE
BUILDING
MAINTENANCE
IN THE MORNING
AND LET THEM KNOW
THE ELEVATOR IS
OUT AGAIN. I'M
SURE IT WILL
BE REPAIRED
SHORTLY.

Huff ☆☆☆
REMINDE ME--
puff ☆☆☆ REMIND
ME AGAIN
HOW MUCH
WE'RE PAYING
FOR THIS
DUMP?

SIGNIFICANTLY
MORE THAN WE'VE
BEEN BRINGING IN
LATELY, I'M AFRAID.
NOW **BREATHE,**
SIR.



ODD.

WHAT'S THE MATTER?



THE LIGHT APPEARS TO BE OUT.

I TELL YA, WHEN I GET MY HANDS ON THAT LAND-LORD...



I BELIEVE WE HAVE A **FLASH-LIGHT** SOMEWHERE.



GENTLEMEN, WE MUST **SPEAK...**

Huh--?

COG?



WE MUST SPEAK ABOUT THE **HELLSPAWN**. MATTERS ARE ABOUT TO BECOME DECIDEDLY MORE COMPLICATED.

I WARNED YOU TWO THAT YOU WERE CHOSEN TO **ASSIST** HIM, TO BE HIS EYES, HIS **HANDS** IN THE HUMAN WORLD.



SOMETHING IS COMING--

LOOK, YOU OLD FART, YOU GOT A LOT OF NERVE BREAKING IN HERE. YOU'RE LUCKY YOU'RE NOT SHOT FULL OF **HOLES!** AND WHAT'S WITH THE "MISTER SPOOKY" ACT?

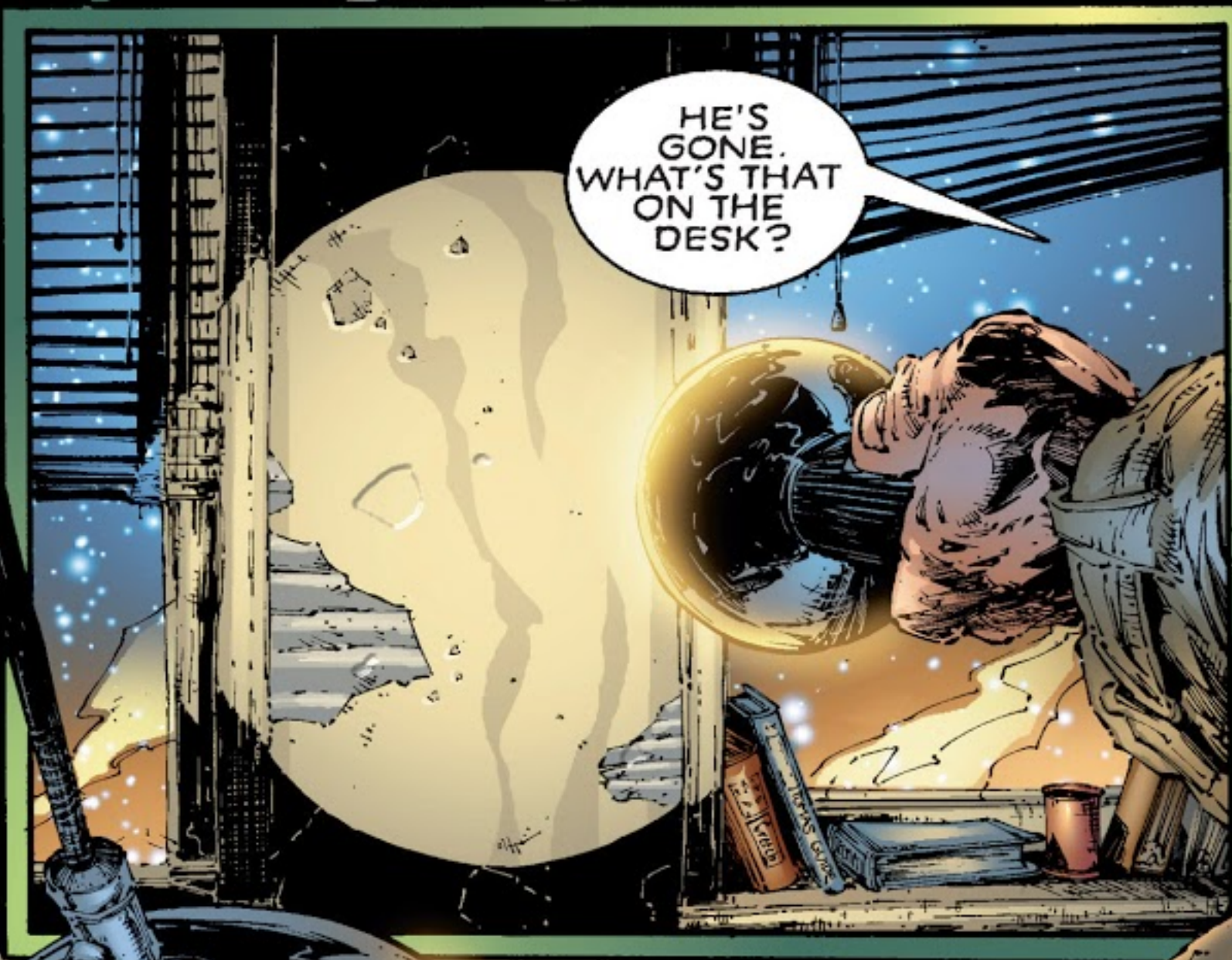
I MUST CONCUR. THESE CRYPTIC ENCOUNTERS AND VAGUE CIRCUMLOCUTIONS ARE WEARING A BIT THIN, MR. COGLIOSTRO.



IT IS TIME YOU LEARNED ABOUT YOUR NEW **MASTER**. HE WILL BE NEEDING YOU ALL TOO **SOON**, I'M AFRAID.

I HAD HOPED YOU TWO WOULD HAVE WORKED MOST OF IT OUT ON YOUR OWN. AS YOU HAVEN'T, I'M LEAVING YOU A LITTLE PRESENT.

IT SHOULD SHED **SOME LIGHT** ON THE SITUATION.



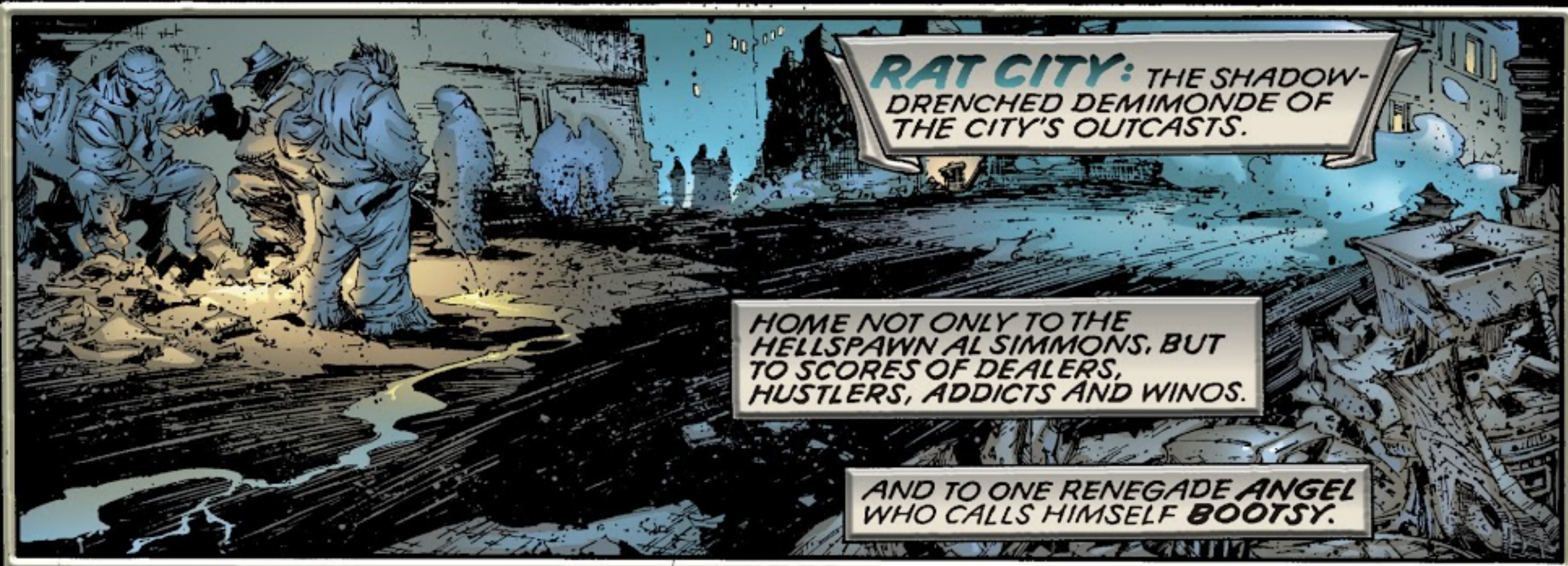
HE'S GONE. WHAT'S THAT ON THE DESK?

SOME KINDA **DOSSIER**.

I DON'T MIND TELLING YOU, TWITCH, THAT OLD FOSSIL IS REALLY GETTING ON MY **NERVES**.



INDEED, SIR.



RAT CITY: THE SHADOW-DRENCHED DEMIMONDE OF THE CITY'S OUTCASTS.

HOME NOT ONLY TO THE HELLSPAWN AL SIMMONS, BUT TO SCORES OF DEALERS, HUSTLERS, ADDICTS AND WINOS.

AND TO ONE RENEGADE ANGEL WHO CALLS HIMSELF **BOOTS**.

HEY, BOBBY. HOW YA FEELIN', PAL? YOU OKAY NOW?

BOOTS, I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENED, BUT I THINK I OWE YOU MY LIFE. * WHATEVER YOU DID... THANKS, PAL.

DON'T MENTION IT. JUST GO EASY ON THE **GRAPE** THERE, OKAY?

*SPAWN TO.

NAH. IT'S OKAY. JUST A LITTLE NIP TO TAKE THE EDGE--

UGH!

BOBBY?

I'M FINE, BUDDY. IT COMES AND GOES LIKE THIS...

OKAY, WELL TAKE IT EASY, ALL RIGHT...? LISTEN, I HAVE TO TELL YOU SOMETHING.

I MIGHT HAVE TO GO AWAY. MAYBE FOR **GOOD**.



I COULD BE IN TROUBLE. I-- I DID SOMETHING I WASN'T SUPPOSED TO DO.

TROUBLE? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

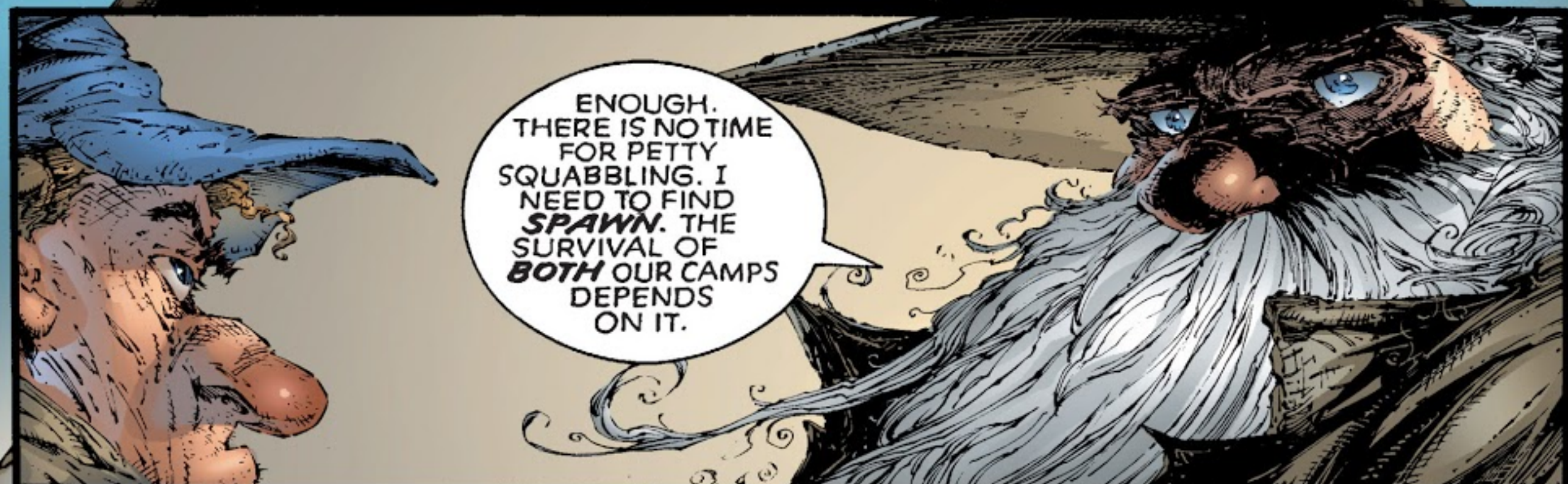


HE MEDDLED IN THE AFFAIRS OF MORTALS BY SAVING YOUR LIFE. NOW HE FEARS **CELESTIAL** RETRIBUTION. ISN'T THAT RIGHT, "BOOTSY"?



COME. WE NEED TO SPEAK.

WHAT'S YOUR GAME, COGLIOSTRO? THE MACHINATIONS OF **HEAVEN** ARE SOMETHING YOU'RE HARDLY QUALIFIED TO SPEAK ON.



ENOUGH. THERE IS NO TIME FOR PETTY SQUABBLING. I NEED TO FIND **SPAWN**. THE SURVIVAL OF **BOTH** OUR CAMPS DEPENDS ON IT.



HEY, WHATEVER YOU TWO BEEN DRINKING, HOW 'BOUT YOU PASS THE BOTTLE!

DON'T ACT SO SURPRISED. YOU **FEEL** IT **TOO**, DON'T YOU, BOOTSY?



"THERE IS A STORM GATHERING. A **THIRD FORCE** WHICH LIES BETWEEN **HEAVEN** AND **HELL**. IT CARES NOTHING OF THE WAR WE WAGE.



"BUT IT COULD PROVE THE UNDOING OF THE **HELL-SPAWN**. IF AL SIMMONS PERISHES, WE BOTH KNOW WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.



"THE **FINAL BATTLE** WILL COMMENCE... AND **EARTH** WILL BE TORN APART IN THE PROCESS."

A FEW WEEKS AGO, EDDIE BECKETT WAS ABOUT AS LOW AS A MAN COULD GET. HOPELESS, HELPLESS, NOT A FRIEND IN THE WORLD.

BUT THAT'S ALL CHANGED. NOW EDDIE SEES HIMSELF AS A SQUIRE OF THE STREETS. A MAN OF ACTION.

THE KIND OF MAN WHO GETS THINGS DONE.

C'MON, EDDIE. I'M DRY AS A DESERT. HOW YOU GOING TO SCORE THE GOODS?

LEAVE IT TO ME. I'M MADE TO AMAZE.

ALL RIGHT THEN...

LET ME HAVE A PINT OF OLD HARPER, THREE BOTTLES OF T-BIRD, SOME OF THAT JERKY, A COUPLE OF THOSE SKIN MAGS AND A CARTON OF CIGS.

YOU KNOW MY BRAND.

Uh-uh.

I'M GONNA GIVE YOU **ONE PACK** OF CIGARETTES 'CAUSE I'M A NICE GUY. BUT YOU GOT TO **EARN** THE REST.



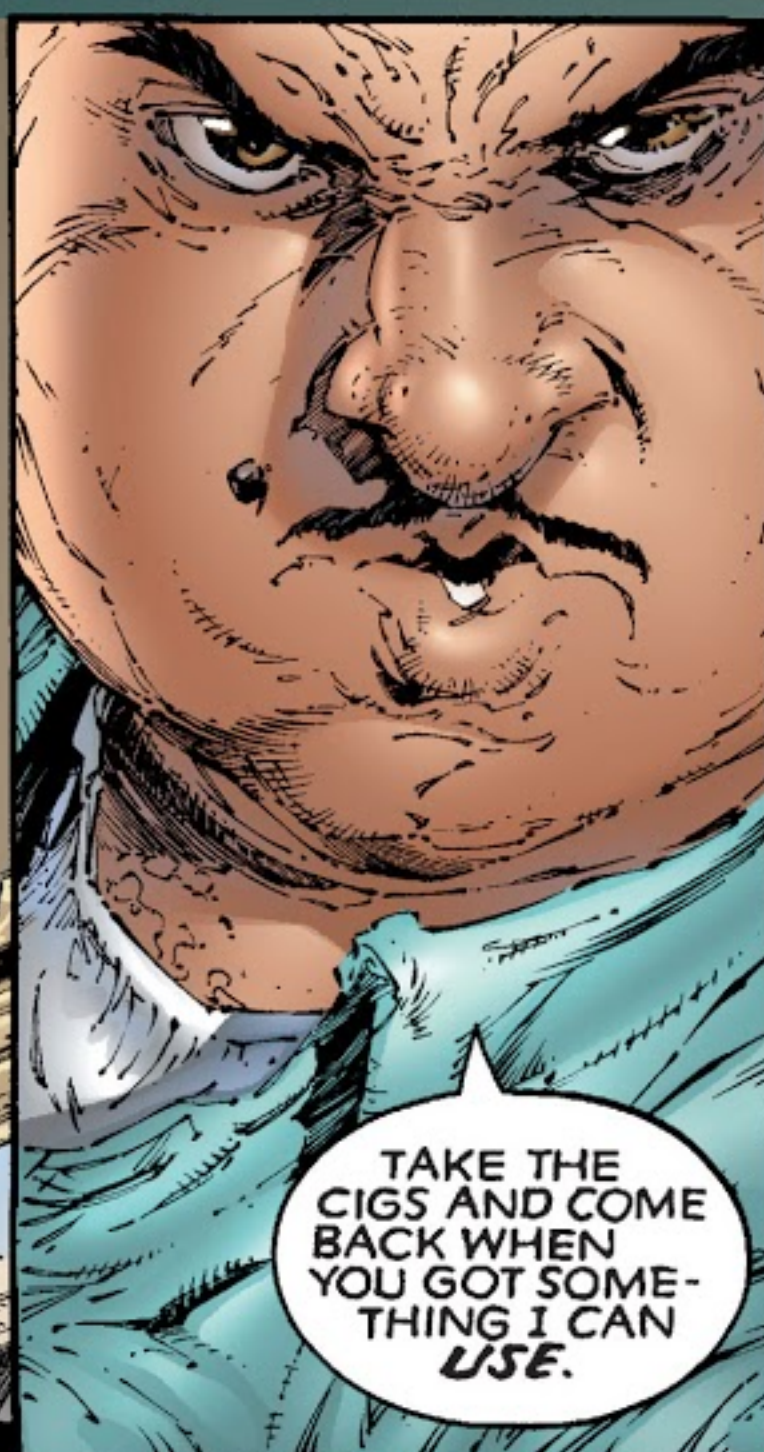
COME ON, POPS. YOU KNOW I'M GOOD FOR IT.

YOU AIN'T BEEN GOOD FOR MUCH LATELY. LET ME EXPLAIN THE CONCEPT OF **TRADE** TO YOU.



YOU GIVE SOMETHING OF VALUE TO ME, AND IN RETURN I GIVE **YOU** SOMETHING OF VALUE.

BUT LATELY YOU AIN'T BROUGHT ME NOTHING.



TAKE THE CIGS AND COME BACK WHEN YOU GOT SOMETHING I CAN **USE**.



HEY, POPS! WAS THAT THAT NO GOOD BUM WHO WAS JUST IN HERE? I DON'T TRUST HIM. HEAR HE'S **HOLDING OUT** ON US.

WHAT, HE'S GOT THE **HOPE DIAMOND** HIDDEN UNDER THEM RAGS OF HIS?



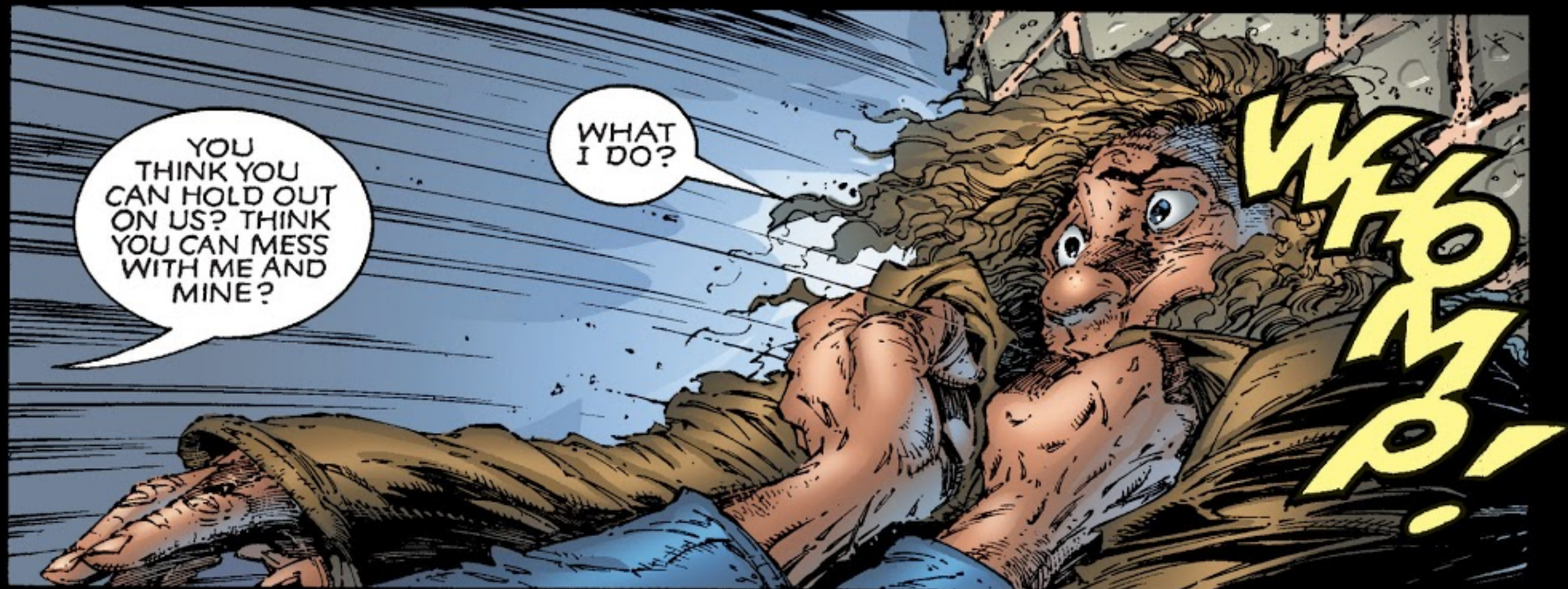
I DON'T KNOW, BUT GINO AN' MICKY HEARD HIM BRAGGING TO THE OTHER TRASH-BAGS HOW HE LUCKED INTO "SOMETHING SPECIAL". I DON'T LIKE IT.

HE DID, DID HE?



WELL, I STILL DON'T THINK HE COULD HAVE MUCH OF NOTHING, BUT YOU CHECK IT OUT JUST THE SAME.

DON'T WORRY, POPS. I'LL TALK TO HIM. LET HIM KNOW GENTLY THAT YOU DON'T MUCK WITH THE DIMINOS.



YOU
THINK YOU
CAN HOLD OUT
ON US? THINK
YOU CAN MESS
WITH ME AND
MINE?

WHAT
I DO?

WHOMP!

WORD IS, YOU
CAME ACROSS SOME-
THING OF *VALUE*.
GOT GREEDY.

YOU
KNOW THE
DEAL. YOUR
JOB IS KEEP
YOUR EYES
OPEN.

YOU TELL
US WHEN SOME-
ONE IS GOIN'
AWAY FOR THE
WEEKEND, OR
WHEN SOME RICH
KID PARKS HIS
CAR IN A STUPID
PLACE.

THAT'S
YOUR
JOB.

IT'S
NOT
YOUR PLACE
TO BE LIFTING
GOODS FOR
*YOUR-
SELF!*

SO,
WHATEVER
IT IS YOU
FOUND,
*HAND IT
OVER.*

IT'S NOT
LIKE THAT.
LOOK---

--IT WAS
JUST
TALK.

IT DON'T
MEAN
NOTHING
TO ANYONE
BUT ME.

LOOK,
I'LL
SHOW
YOU.

JUST
BIG
TALK.



SEE. IT'S NOT WORTH ANYTHING. JUST SOMETHING I FOUND. MAKES ME FEEL... **SPECIAL.**

CONFIDENT.

I DON'T KNOW WHY.

LEMME SEE?



WHAT THE HELL?

IT'S A BAG FULL OF **SNOT!** YOU THINK THIS IS FUNNY?!



WE TAKE **CARE** OF YOU AND YOU'RE PLAYING SOME KIND OF SICK **JOKE**, IS THAT IT?

No!
I SWEAR!



REAL FUNNY, LOSER. I'M BUSTING A **GUT** HERE!

AAAAAH!
NO!

WHO'S LAUGHING NOW, DIPSTICK?



HOURS
PASS,
THE
MOON
ARCS
THROUGH
THE
NIGHT
SKY.

SPRAWLED AT
THE LITERAL
CROSSROADS
OF HEAVEN
AND HELL,
EDDIE
BECKETT LIES
DYING, HIS
BODY NUMB TO
THE BLOOD-
WARM BREEZE
THAT FLOWS
THROUGH
THE ALLEYS.

AGAINST THE
ACHING, SLOW
DRIP OF TIME,
HE CLINGS
DESPERATELY
TO HIS LAST
MOMENTS.

HE DOES NOT
KNOW THAT THE
STRANGE, EERIE
SUBSTANCE HE
SO COVETED, IN
FACT THE FUEL
BEHIND HIS
AGGRESSIVE-
NESS...

...CONTAINS A
PORTION OF THE
HELLSPAWN'S
POWER.*

* SEE LAST ISSUE
FOR DETAILS.

DYING WITH SLOW
AND SHALLOW BREATHS,
HE DOESN'T NOTICE THE
NECROPLASM
INCHING LANGUIDLY
TOWARDS HIM.



NECROPLASM
IS SYMBIOTIC BY
NATURE. IT
REQUIRES A
HOST IN ORDER
TO FUNCTION
PROPERLY.

HAFF
HAFF

HUCHKK..

AAARGH!!

IT SEEPS INTO HIS WOUNDS,
MIXING WITH BLOOD...
PERMEATING HIS ORGANS,
EATING THE MARROW
FROM HIS BONES.

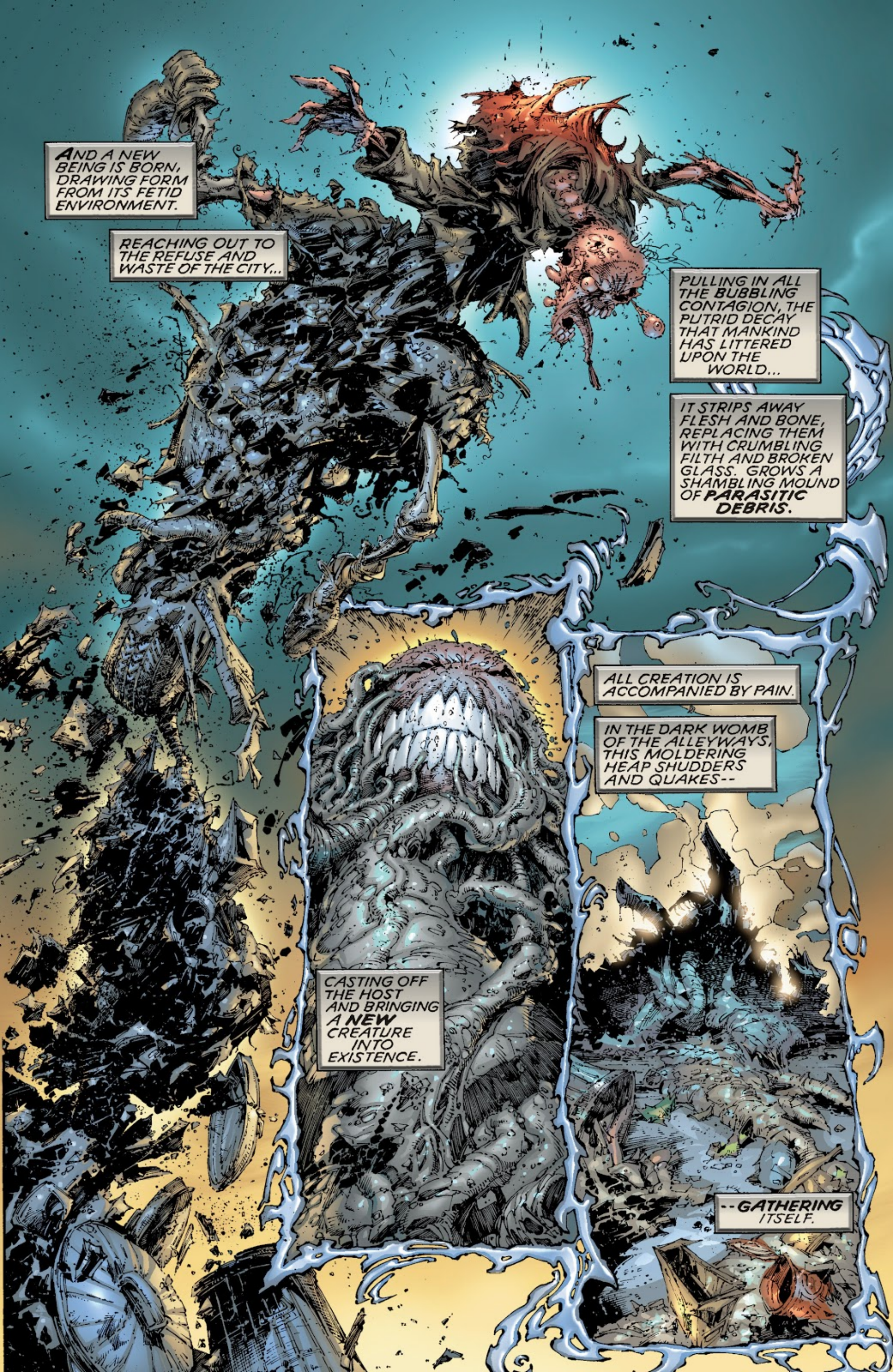
RE-CREATING THE HOST
FOR ITS OWN NEEDS.

BUT EDDIE
BECKETT
DOESN'T
UNDER-
STAND ANY
OF THIS.



HE ONLY
UNDERSTANDS
THE PAIN.

WHA-
WHAT IS
HAPPENING
TO ME?!



AND A NEW
BEING IS BORN,
DRAWING FORM
FROM ITS FETID
ENVIRONMENT.

REACHING OUT TO
THE REFUSE AND
WASTE OF THE CITY...

PULLING IN ALL
THE BUBBLING
CONTAGION, THE
PUTRID DECAY
THAT MANKIND
HAS LITTERED
UPON THE
WORLD...

IT STRIPS AWAY
FLESH AND BONE,
REPLACING THEM
WITH CRUMBLING
FILTH AND BROKEN
GLASS. GROWS A
SHAMBLING MOUND
OF PARASITIC
DEBRIS.

ALL CREATION IS
ACCOMPANIED BY PAIN.

IN THE DARK WOMB
OF THE ALLEYWAYS,
THIS MOLDERING
HEAP SHUDDERS
AND QUAKES--

CASTING OFF
THE HOST
AND BRINGING
A NEW
CREATURE
INTO
EXISTENCE.

--GATHERING
ITSELF.

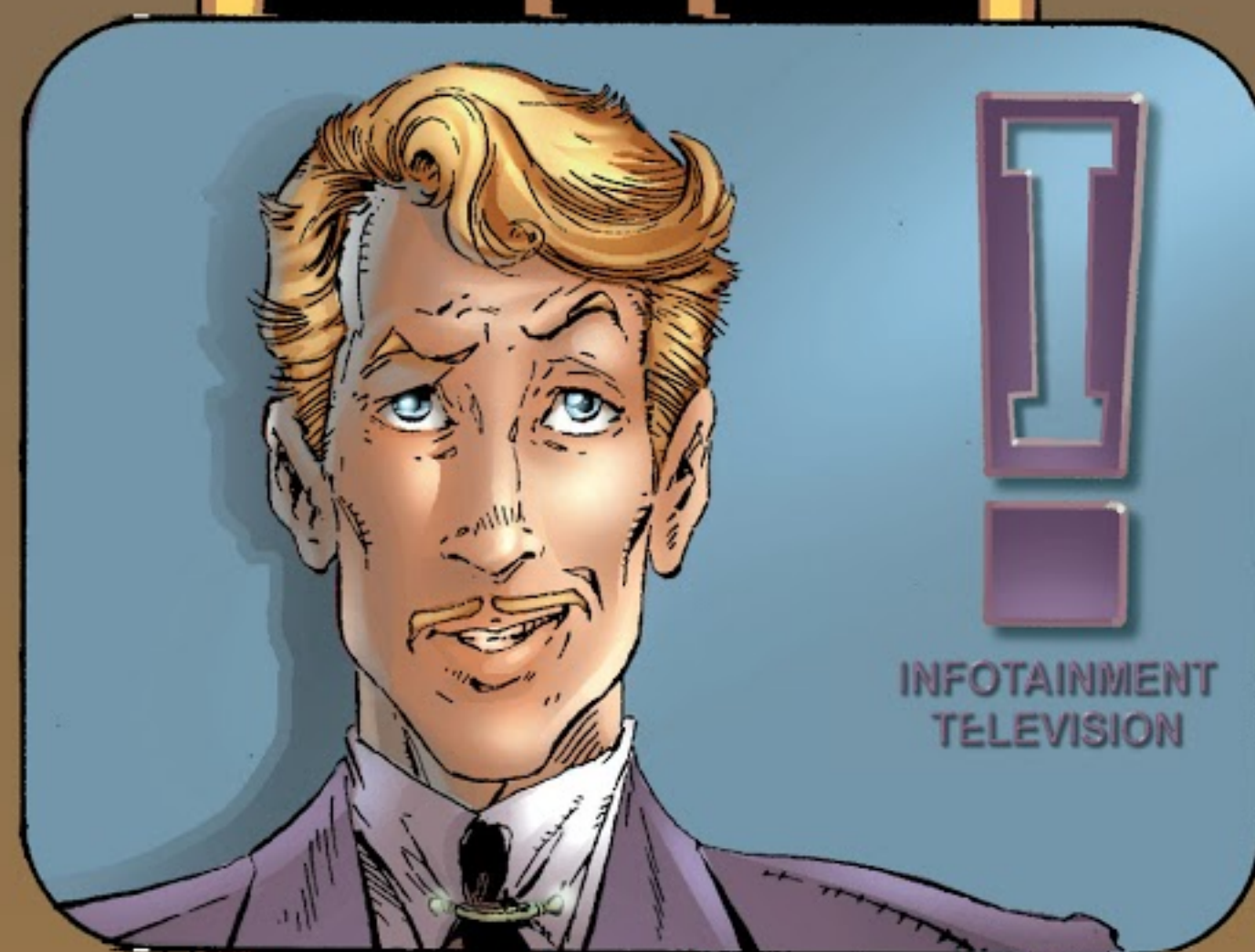
AND THEN,
IN THE TOXIC
YELLOW LIGHT OF
THE STREETLAMPS,
THE CREATURE
RISES.



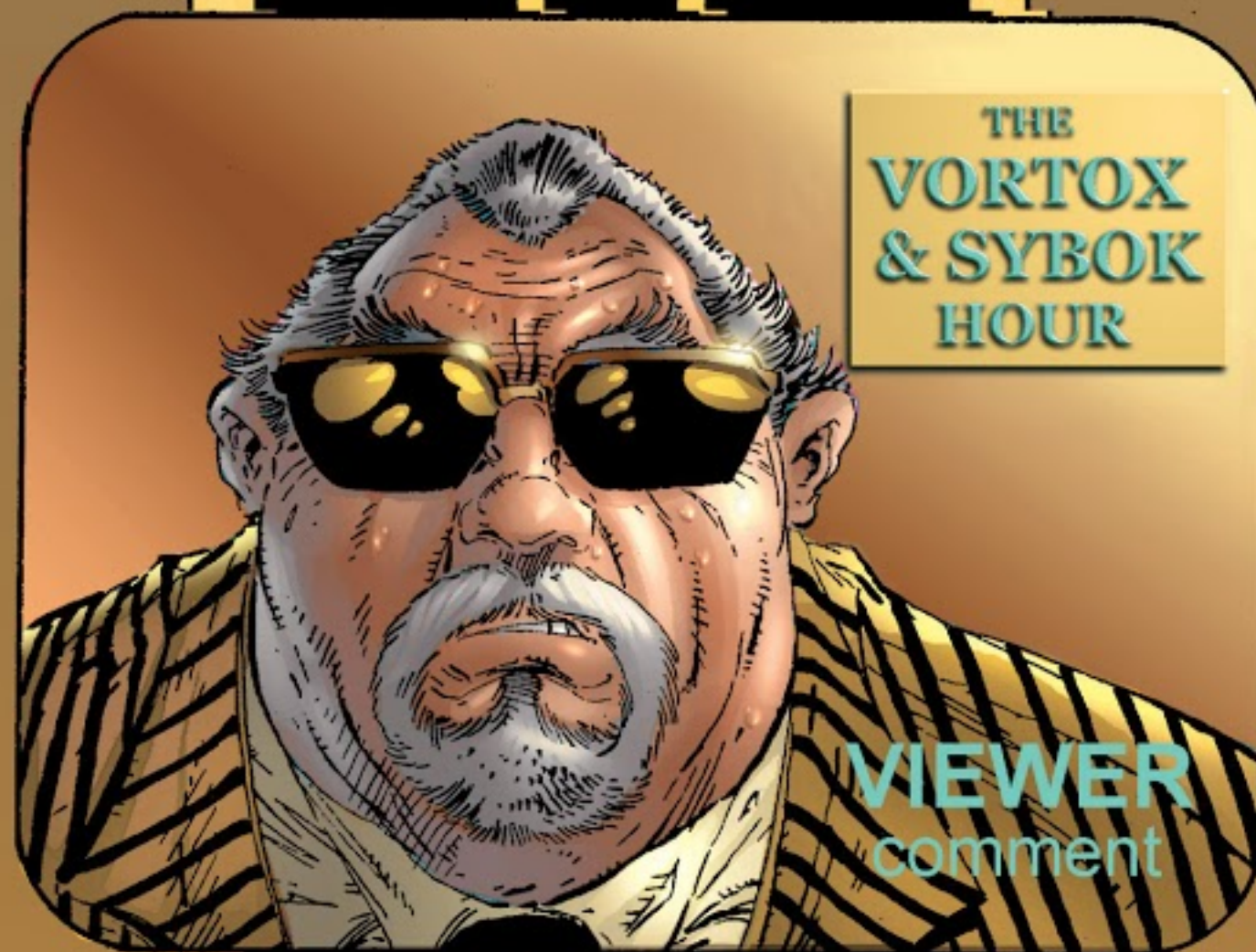


...WHERE TEMPERATURES CONTINUED TO SOAR FOR THE THIRD CONSECUTIVE DAY. THE PHENOMENON HAS METEOROLOGISTS BAFFLED, DUE NOT ONLY TO THE UNUSUAL JUMP IN TEMPERATURE, BUT ALSO BY THE NOTABLE ABSENCE OF HIGH PRESSURE SYSTEMS AND OTHER TYPICAL INDICATORS. ALSO UNUSUAL IS THE FACT THAT THE SEVERE HEAT WAVE IS EXTREMELY LOCALIZED, AFFECTING ONLY ROUGHLY ONE HALF OF THE BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN.

ACCORDING TO A SPOKESPERSON FOR THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE, RESEARCHERS ARE EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE INCIDENT IS BEING CAUSED BY SOME KIND OF GEO-THERMIC ACTIVITY. HOWEVER, THEY POINT OUT THAT GIVEN THE BEDROCK COMPOSITION OF MANHATTAN ISLAND, IT IS VERY UNLIKELY THAT SUCH IS THE CASE.



IN NEW YORK, FILMING ON THE UPCOMING SUBWAY TERRORIST THRILLER "*THIRD RAIL*" HAD TO BE HALTED YESTERDAY AFTER THE CAST AND CREW COMPLAINED OF SEVERE HEAT FATIGUE AND *DEHYDRATION*. AT ONE POINT TEMPERATURES BROKE THE *130 MARK* UNDER THE PUNISHING GLOW OF THE STAGE LIGHTS. HERVE LAFAYE, THE CONTROVERSIAL FRENCH DIRECTOR OF "*NIGHT BRIGADE*" AND "*THE 13TH APOSTLE*," INITIALLY OBJECTED TO THE NOTION OF CEASING PRODUCTION, BERATING THE FILM'S STARS AND REPORTEDLY CALLING THEM "*WHINING, OVERPAID, PAMPERED BABIES*". SCREEN ACTORS GUILD REPRESENTATIVES INTERVENED AND THE STUDIO FINALLY ORDERED FILMING TO BE SHUT DOWN FOR THE DAY, BUT NOT BEFORE *SEVERAL* PEOPLE WERE RUSHED TO THE HOSPITAL. MIKE OVITZ, WHERE ARE YOU WHEN WE *NEED* YOU?



HOT ENOUGH FOR YOU? THIS PAST WEEK, THE CAPITAL OF THE CIVILIZED WORLD INCHED ONE STEP CLOSER TO LITERALLY BECOMING *HELL ON EARTH*. TEMPERATURES SOAR WITH NO APPARENT EXPLANATION. OZONE LAYER, EL NINO, FREAK VOLCANIC ACTIVITY? *FOOEY!* ALL THOSE SCENARIOS ARE IMPLAUSIBLE ON PURELY *SCIENTIFIC* GROUNDS. SO WHAT COULD CAUSE SUCH A SIGNIFICANT, LOCALIZED INCREASE IN NEIGHBORHOOD TEMPERATURES? TWO WORDS, MY FRIENDS: *NUCLEAR WASTE*. HAS THE GOVERNMENT BEEN ILLEGALLY STOCKPILING NUCLEAR MATERIALS BENEATH THE CITY? OFFICIALS, NOT SURPRISINGLY, HAVE DESCRIBED SUCH A PROSPECT AS "*NONSENSE*" AND "*SHEER PARANOIA*". SO, WE'RE LEFT WITH THE ONLY REMAINING POSSIBILITY, THAT *HELL'S EMBASSY* IN MANHATTAN HAS SIMPLY DECIDED TO STOKE THE *FURNACES*. I'VE GOT MY DOUBTS, BUT WHAT'S LEFT?

BY MIDDAY, THE CITY BURNS LIKE A HOT COAL.

**IT IS THE TYPE OF HEAT THAT
CAUSES PASSIONS TO RISE
WITH THE MERCURY.**

**THE KIND OF HEAT
THAT MAKES LOYAL
HUSBANDS AND
WIVES RASHLY PACK
THEIR BAGS AND
ABANDON THEIR
SPOUSES, THEIR
CHILDREN WITH-
OUT A WORD...**

**... THAT LEADS QUIET,
SENSIBLE MEN TO
LONELY ROOFTOPS,
WHERE THEY LOOK
DOWN ON THE CITY
WITH MURDER IN
THEIR MINDS.**



**THOSE WHO
CAN FLEE THE
CITY, HEADING
FOR A MORE
PLEASANT
CLIME JUST
ACROSS THE
NEAREST
BRIDGE.**



**THOSE WHO
CAN'T TRY
DESPERATELY
TO FIND A WAY
TO ESCAPE
OR ENDURE
OR FORGET.**



**AS THE DAY
SLIPS INTO
EVENING--**

**-- THE HEAT
INCREASES.**



**FORECAST FOR
TOMORROW:**

**MORE
OF THE
SAME.**



THE HEAT DOES NOT ABATE WITH THE COMING OF NIGHT. THE SHADOWS DRAPE ACROSS THE ALLEYWAYS LIKE LAYERS OF HOT TAR. ONE OF THE SHADOWS MOVES.

BOBBY?

OVER HERE, AL. HOW YOU DOIN', BUDDY?

I NEED TO FIND BOOTSY. WHERE IS HE?

BOOTSY? WHAT D'YA WANT HIM FOR?

THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG IN THE ALLEYS. ANGELS, VAMPIRES, AND NOW... SOMETHING ELSE. I CAN FEEL IT... LIKE A PART OF ME.

WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU GUYS ON? BOOTSY BARELY KNOWS HIS OWN NAME.

HE'S A NICE GUY, DON'T GET ME WRONG--

I THINK BOOTSY KNOWS THE ANSWERS.

BOOTSY IS NOT WHAT HE APPEARS. HAVE YOU SEEN HIM OR NOT?

YEAH. I SAW HIM A WHILE AGO. HE WAS AT THAT PLACE HE LIKES, NEAR THAT OLD BOARDED-UP BOOK-BINDERS.

THE DEAD ZONE.

"DEAD ZONE"? WHAT "DEAD ZONE"? AL?

PREMONITIONS...

A DULL
SENSE OF
PERIL GRIPS
THE HELL-
SPAWN AS
HE MOVES
THROUGH
THE ALLEYS.

AN UNNAMED
DREAD CALLING
OUT TO HIM.

A STRANGE
PRESENCE THAT
REVERBERATES
THROUGH HIS
NECROPLASMIC
CORE.

FAMILIAR... LIKE
SOME VAGUE **ECHO**
OF HIMSELF.

IT'S
WATCHING.

LIKE A GREAT
BEAST
BREATHING IN...

OUT...

SLOWLY...

DELIBERATELY.

WAITING
PATIENTLY FOR
THE RIGHT MOMENT
TO **ACT**.

THE ALLEYWAYS
SHUDDER AND
CONVULSE,
RAINING DOWN
REFUSE AND
DEBRIS.

THE SPAWN,
MISUNDERSTANDING,
LOOKS FOR SIGNS
OF AN INTRUDER.
SOMEONE OR SOME-
THING HIDING
BEHIND THE PILES
OF TRASH.

INSTINCTIVELY, HIS
SENTIENT **CAPE**
REACTS, GATHERS IT-
SELF FOR **BATTLE**.

THE RUMBLING
GROWS LOUDER, A
GREAT WAVE OF
WASTE COLLECTING
ITSELF... UNULATING,
SHIMMERING WITH
DAMP, FETID HEAT.

AND SPAWN
LOOKS UP TO
DISCOVER
THIS VAGUE
DREAD HE
FEELS HAS
A **FACE**.



NEARBY, WORN
HEELS STRIKE
HOT ASPHALT.

COG!
COG!
COGLIOSTRO!



THANK
GOD YOU'RE
HERE. IT'S
HAPPENING. I
DON'T KNOW WHAT,
BUT I - I CAN FEEL
IT... THAT **DANGER**
YOU SPOKE OF,
IT'S COMING FOR
SPAWN!

WE HAVE
TO FIND HIM,
HELP HIM!

NOW
YOU WANT
TO HELP HIM?
I THOUGHT
HEAVEN
WANTED HIM
DEAD.



DON'T
PLAY
GAMES
WITH ME, COG.
THIS IS TOO
IMPORTANT.
YOU KNOW
WHAT'S AT
STAKE!



VERY
WELL. WE
BOTH KNEW
THIS DAY
WOULD
COME.



I JUST
HOPE
WE'RE
NOT TOO
LATE.

SPAWN STRUGGLES
AGAINST THE
TOWERING WALL OF
LIVING RUBBISH,
ENGULFED BY THE
ROTTING HEAT OF
DECAY.

DECADES OF
ABANDONED
REFUSE GIVEN
HUMAN FORM...

ALL THE POISONOUS
DEBRIS THAT HAS
ASSAULTED THE
EARTH...

ALL THE CARELESSLY
DISGARDED DEBRIS
THAT HAS MARRED
NATURE'S VERDANT
GLORY... GATHERS
ITSELF INTO AN
UNSTOPPABLE,
GARGANTUAN
HEAP.

FOR CENTURIES, NATURE
HAS ENDURED THE
INDIFFERENT OFFENSES
OF MANKIND.

BEGINNING TONIGHT,
NATURE IS
STRIKING BACK.



TO BE
CONTINUED.



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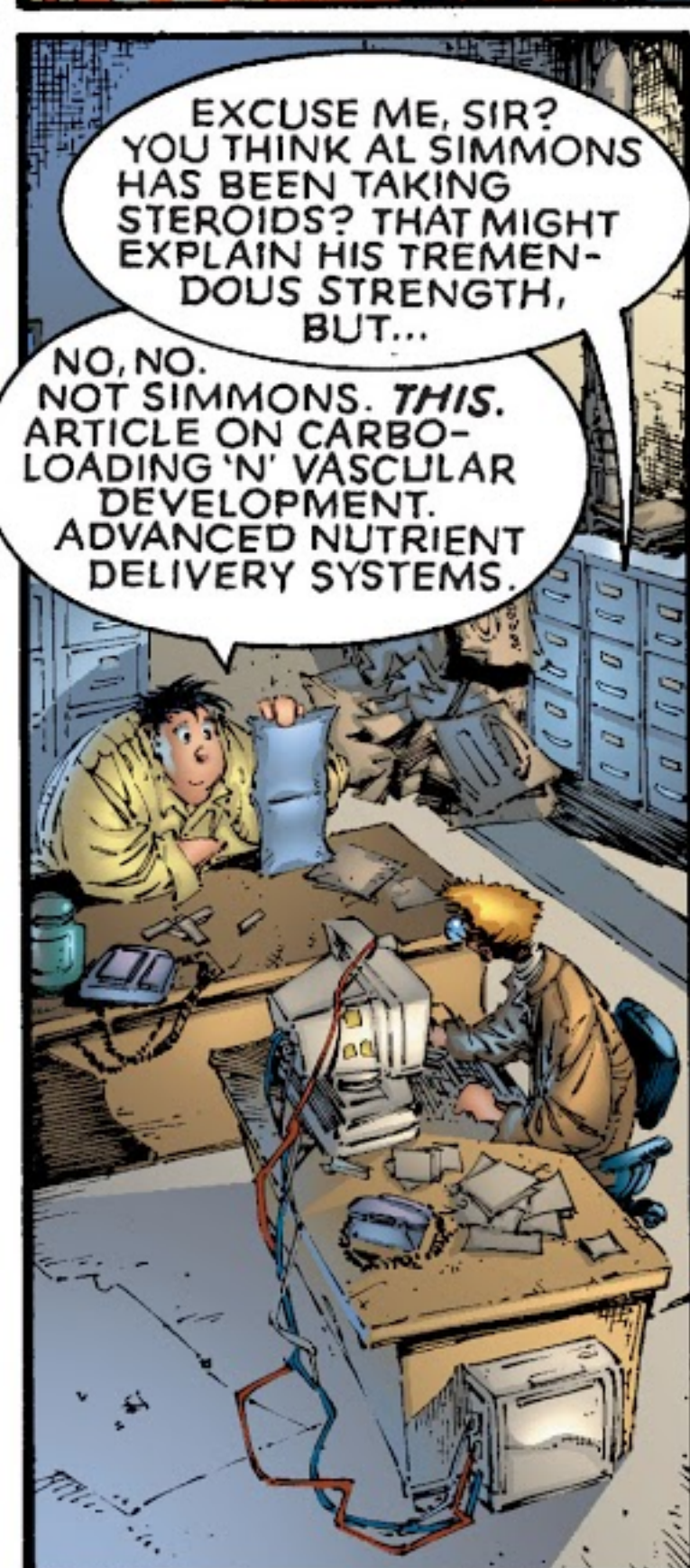
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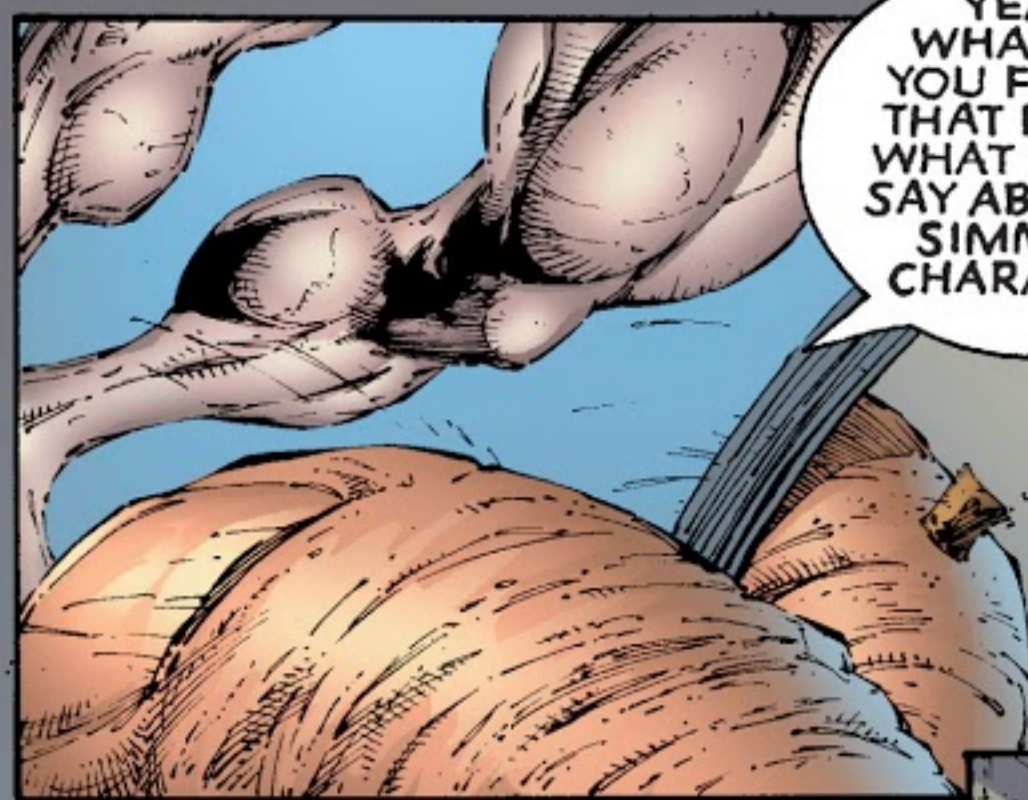
SPAWN



Capullo
5/0







YEAH, WHAT DID YOU FIND IN THAT FILE? WHAT DOES IT SAY ABOUT THIS SIMMONS CHARACTER?



VERY COMPELLING. LT. COL. AL SIMMONS. EXCELLENT STUDENT AND ATHLETE. WAR HERO. TOOK A BULLET IN A PRESIDENTIAL ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT.

HE THEN JOINS THE C.I.A., GOES **BLACK OPS** FOR A WHILE. SHOWS UP IN SOME VERY INTERESTING PLACES. ANGOLA, NICARAGUA, CAMBODIA...

MARRIES HIS LONGTIME SWEETHEART, A MISS **WANDA BLAKE**. THEY SETTLE DOWN A LITTLE BUT HE STILL "TRAVELS" A LOT.



BEST FRIEND WAS A FELLOW OPERATIVE NAMED **TERRY FITZGERALD**. TERRY AND WANDA. RING A BELL?

YEAH. LITTLE GIRL. KIDNAPPING CASE A WHILE AGO... WHAT ELSE?

THIS SHOULD GET YOUR ATTENTION, SIR.

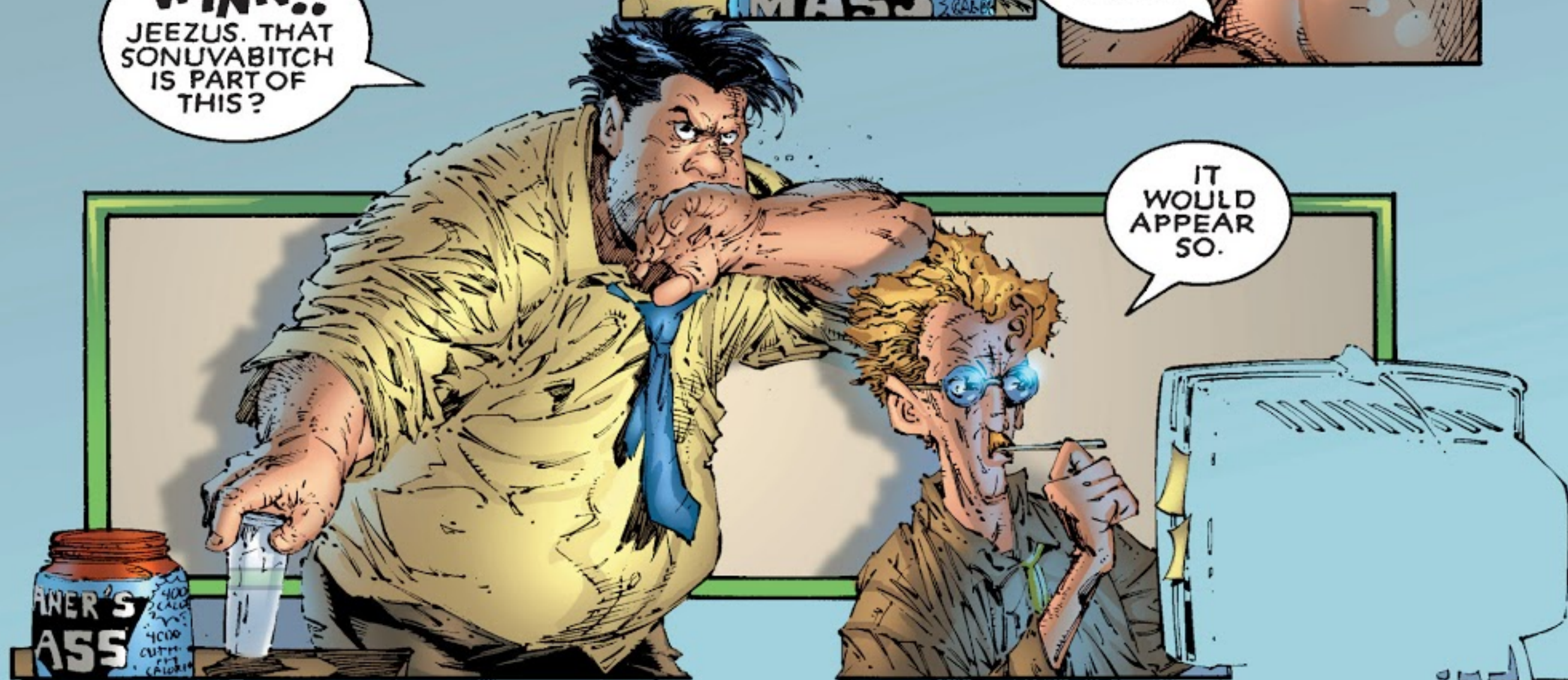


BOTH MEN REPORTED DIRECTLY TO THE SAME MAN...



... UNITED STATES SECURITY COUNCIL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR **JASON WYNN**.

WYNN?!
JEEZUS. THAT SONUVABITCH IS PART OF THIS?



IT WOULD APPEAR SO.



DAMN. I DON'T LIKE THE SMELL OF THIS ONE, TWITCH.

THERE'S MORE. SIMMONS *DIES* IN THE LINE OF DUTY. IS GIVEN A HERO'S FUNERAL. A COUPLE YEARS LATER WANDA BLAKE AND TERRY FITZGERALD ARE WED.



SO SPAWN'S A *DEAD GUY*, huh? GUESS THAT WOULD EXPLAIN THE COMPLEXION.

YES. UNFORTUNATELY, IT DOESN'T EXPLAIN THE GETTING-UP-AND-MOVING-AROUND PART.



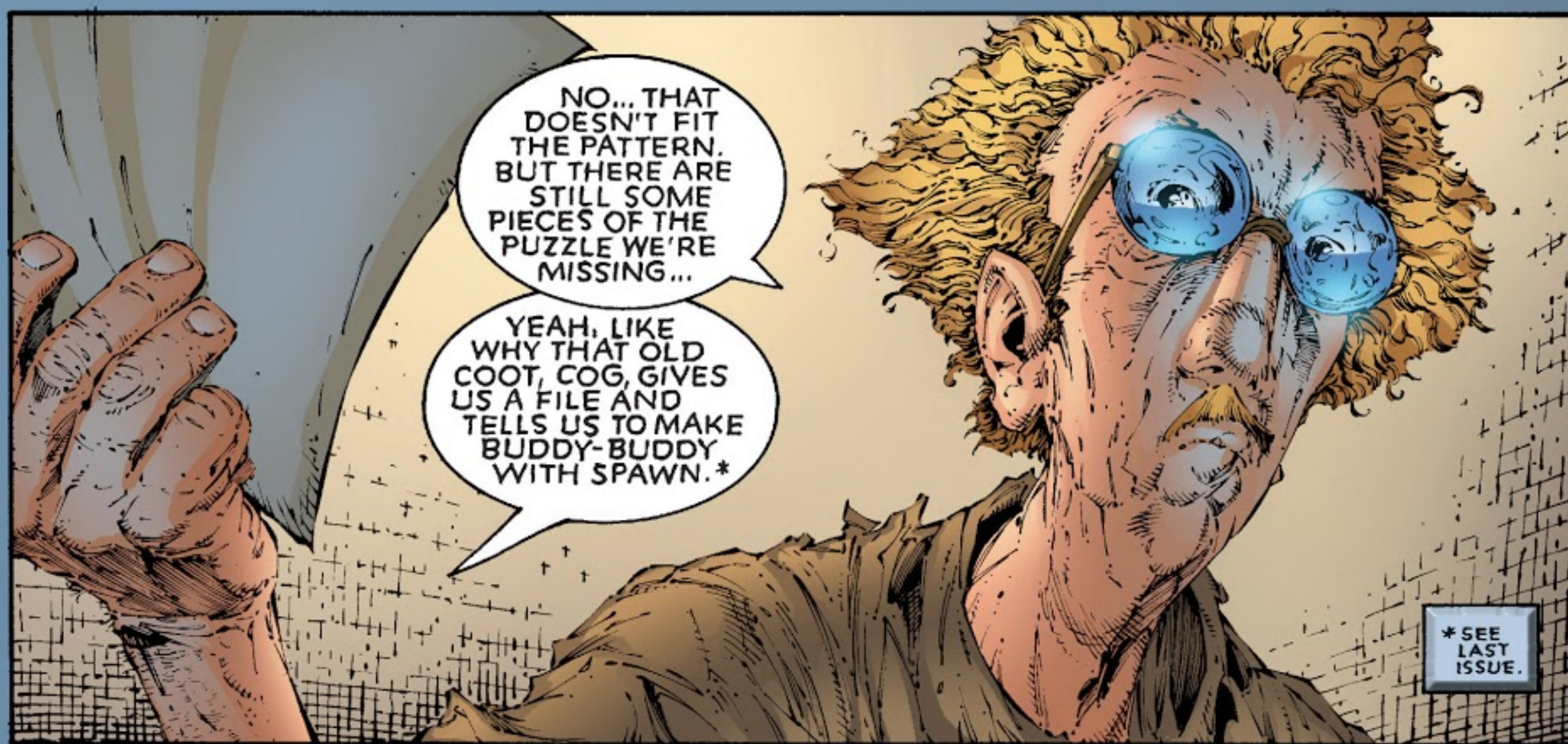
Hmm. JASON WYNN... THAT'S ONE SNAKE THAT SEEMS TO BE IN EVERY GARDEN.



SO THIS TIES SIMMONS TO WYNN, WHICH TIES HIM TO SENATOR JENNINGS, WHICH TIES HIM TO BILLY KINCAID...

> Sigh <
WHICH TIES HIM TO CHIEF BANKS, MAY HE BURN IN HELL, WHICH TIES HIM INTO *US* GETTING OUR BUTTS KICKED OFF THE FORCE.

COULD IT BE THAT SIMMONS IS STILL OPERATING UNDER WYNN? SOME EXPERIMENTAL MILITARY PROJECT...



NO... THAT DOESN'T FIT THE PATTERN. BUT THERE ARE STILL SOME PIECES OF THE PUZZLE WE'RE MISSING...

YEAH, LIKE WHY THAT OLD COOT, COG, GIVES US A FILE AND TELLS US TO MAKE BUDDY-BUDDY WITH SPAWN.*

* SEE LAST ISSUE.



AND IS THIS ALL VERIFIED? IT ALL CHECKS OUT WITH THE DATABASE?

EVERYTHING I COULD GET ACCESS TO. AS I SAID, THERE ARE STILL A LOT OF DARK AREAS.

WELL, IF EVEN *HALF* OF IT'S TRUE, THERE'S SOME BAD MOJO GOING DOWN. MORE CORPSES COME OUTTA THOSE ALLEYS THAN COCKROACHES.

WELL I TELL YA, TWITCH. WE'RE GONNA GET THOSE MISSING ANSWERS. EVEN IF I GOTTA PRY THEM OUT OF HIM WITH MY BARE HANDS.

INDEED, SIR?



THAT'S RIGHT. I FIGURE WE GOT AT LEAST ENOUGH TO HOLD HIM FOR QUESTIONING.

WE'RE BRINGING HIM IN.

RAT CITY. THE SCORCHING, FETID HEAT HANGS THICK IN THE AIR. RODENTS SCURRY FROM THEIR COVER, FRIGHTENED BY THE TERRIBLE DIN OF BATTLE.

CHOOM!

A PLAGUE WIND GUSTS THROUGH THE ALLEYWAYS. LITTER AND DEBRIS ERUPT INTO THE NIGHT.

LET GO OF ME!

I DON'T KNOW WHO SENT YOU... BUT THESE ALLEYS BELONG TO ME!

SPAWN REGARDS HIS ENEMY, TRYING TO MAKE SENSE OF THE ASSAULT.

A TOWERING, SHAMBLING MOUND OF LIVING REFUSE. THE UNLEASHED FURY OF A LIVING WORLD WHICH WILL STAND NO MORE ABUSE.

GO
BACK
OFF!

HELL-FORGED
CHAINS LEAP
AND DANCE IN
THE MOONLIGHT.

AS SPAWN BATTLES
THIS LUMBERING,
POISONOUS **HEAP**, A
VAGUE TWINGE OF
RECOGNITION FLOWS
THROUGH HIM...

... A STRANGE
SENSE OF DEJA VU.
AS IF HE SEES HIM-
SELF REFLECTED IN
THE CREATURE'S
EYES.

SPLAK!

WHAT--
WHAT
ARE
YOU?!

WHAMP!

WITH EACH POWERFUL
BLOW, THE HEAP
EXPLODES IN A
CASCADE OF ROTTING
REFUSE, ONLY TO
REASSEMBLE ITSELF
A MOMENT LATER...

SLAM

CRASH

A WAVE OF TERROR
ENGULFS THE HELL-
SPAWN AS HE PASSES
THROUGH THE HEART
OF THE BEAST.

IT GATHERS
ITSELF
AGAIN--

-- GREATER
THAN
BEFORE--

DAMN

-- AS SPAWN
STARES INTO
THE GAPING
FACE OF
DOOM.

WE'RE TOO LATE.

NO... WE CAN'T BE...



BY THE SHINING CITY...

DO SOMETHING, DAMN IT. YOU DO HAVE A PLAN, DON'T YOU?

No!



SPAWN!
AL!
GET AWAY!
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT THAT IS...

RRRUMBLE



AN AVALANCHE OF PESTILENCE
CAREENS DOWN ON THE HELLSPAWN,
CONSUMING HIM IN ITS WAKE.

THE BLANKET OF REFUSE
QUIVERS SOFTLY FOR A MOMENT,
LIKE THE SURF UPON THE SHORE,
AND THEN IS STILL.

HE'S
GONE.

AL!
AL!
WHERE
ARE
YOU?

COG,
START
LOOKING
FOR HIM.

VERY WELL.
BUT ANSWER ME SOME-
THING, BOOTSY. WHY DO
YOU CARE, OF ALL PEOPLE.
WHY DOES AN AGENT OF
HEAVEN WANT TO
SAVE THE **HELL-
SPAWN**?

YOU
WOULDN'T
BELIEVE
ME.

TRY
ME.

BECAUSE
OF THE WAR.
WHEN HE DIES,
THE GREAT WAR
BEGINS.
ARMAGEDDON WILL
COME. AND WE...
ARE NOT
READY.

MALEBOLGIA
HAS
HARVESTED
TOO MANY
SOULS. HEAVEN
HAS GROWN
CARELESS.

IF THE WAR
BEGINS NOW,
HELL SHALL BE
THE VICTOR.
THAT IS WHY I
MUST KEEP
AL SIMMONS
ALIVE.



IT'S NO
USE. HE'S
NOT HERE.
WHAT DO
WE DO
NOW?

OK, HEAVENLY
HOSTS, OUR NEED
IS DIRE. I BESEECH
THEE, SEND ME
A SIGN...

DON'T
WASTE YOUR
TIME, BOOTSY. YOU
THINK THE OLD
BUGGER GIVES A
CRAP ABOUT ANY
OF THIS?

DO NOT
MOCK ME,
COGLIOSTRO!
I HAVE BEEN
PATIENT WITH YOU,
BUT YOU TEST
MY LIMITS!

I'M NOT IN THIS
CAMPAIGN FOR MY
OWN INTERESTS. I'M
NOT "LOOKING OUT
FOR NUMBER ONE,"
AS YOU ARE!

OKAY...
CALM
DOWN.

THERE ARE
BILLIONS OF
SOULS AT STAKE--
INCLUDING **YOURS**,
YOU FOOL.

BESIDES,
I THINK I
FOUND YOUR
"SIGN."

WHAT
IS IT?



OK NO.
THE **SIGIL**
OF THE
HELL-
SPAWN.

IT'S LEFT BEHIND
WHEN THE SPAWN IS...
ELIMINATED. THE
SERAPHIM HUNTERS
COLLECT THEM AS
TROPHIES.

I KNOW
WHAT IT IS.
REMEMBER
TO WHOM YOU
ARE SPEAKING.
SO HE REALLY
IS GONE...

"HOW SOON
WILL IT START?"

CHA- THOR!

LIGHTNING CUTS A JAGGED
SWATH ACROSS THE NIGHT
SKY. A WELCOME RAIN FALLS
ON THE PARCHED EARTH.

SOON THE SHOWER
BECOMES A DOWN-
POUR. THE DOWN-
POUR BECOMES A
TEMPEST.

THE
HEAVENS
WEEP.

QUEENS, NEW YORK.
THE HOME OF
TERRY AND WANDA
FITZGERALD.

Uh-oh.
HE'S GONE,
MOMMY...

WHAT'S
THAT, BABY?
WHO'S
GONE?

THE
SAD MAN.
SOMETHING
HAPP'N TO HIM.
SOMETHIN'
BAD.

FREEFALL...

WHERE
AM I?

TIME MELTS AWAY,
LOSES ITS MEANING.
HOW LONG HAS HE
BEEN FALLING?

HE TRIES TO SHOUT,
TO CALL OUT, BUT
NO WORDS COME.

WHAT
HAPPENED?
WHERE
AM I?

SOMEONE...
ANYONE...
PLEASE...

THE HELL-
SPAWN
TUMBLES
THROUGH
AN INKY
VOID. AN
ENDLESS,
AIRLESS
ABYSS.

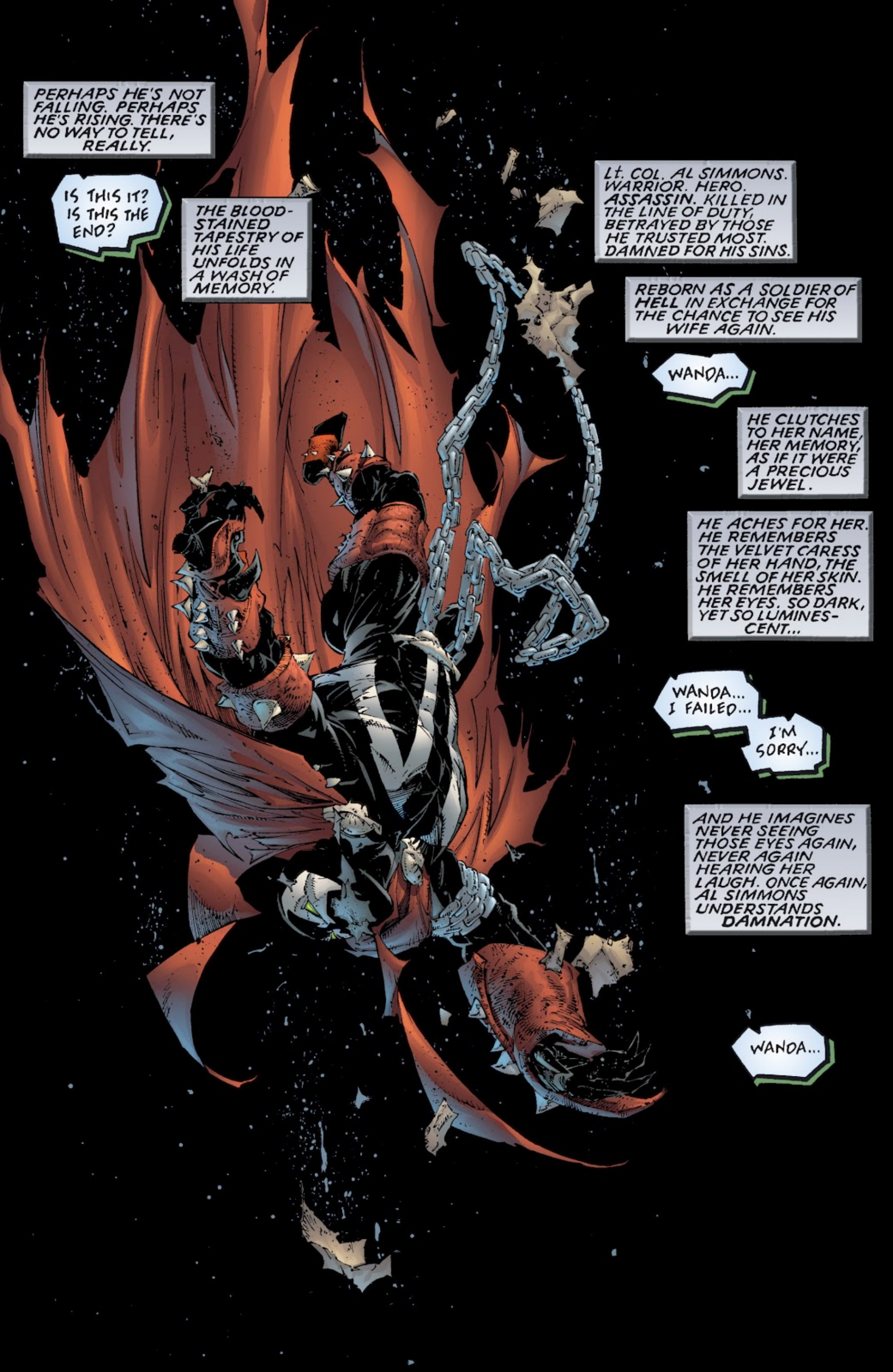
NO SOUND.
NO SENSATION.
JUST A
GARGANTUAN,
ALL-CONSUMING
MAW OF
EMPTYNESS.

MAYBE THIS
IS DEATH. NO
HARPS, NO
PITCHFORKS.
JUST AN END-
LESS, ETERNAL
NOTHINGNESS.
BUT THERE IS
NO PEACE IN
THIS SOLITUDE.
NO COMFORT.

A LIFE-
TIME? A
DEATH-
TIME?

LONG ENOUGH FOR
PANIC TO GROW
INTO TERROR. FOR
FRUSTRATION TO
BLOOM INTO A
DESPERATE AGONY
OF ANTICIPATION.

JUST FEAR.
FEAR AND A
COLOSSAL
LONELINESS
THAT CUTS
HIM TO THE
CORE.



PERHAPS HE'S NOT
FALLING. PERHAPS
HE'S RISING. THERE'S
NO WAY TO TELL,
REALLY.

IS THIS IT?
IS THIS THE
END?

THE BLOOD-
STAINED
TAPESTRY OF
HIS LIFE
UNFOLDS IN
A WASH OF
MEMORY.

LT. COL. AL SIMMONS.
WARRIOR. HERO.
ASSASSIN. KILLED IN
THE LINE OF DUTY,
BETRAYED BY THOSE
HE TRUSTED MOST.
DAMNED FOR HIS SINS.

REBORN AS A SOLDIER OF
HELL IN EXCHANGE FOR
THE CHANCE TO SEE HIS
WIFE AGAIN.

WANDA...

HE CLUTCHES
TO HER NAME,
HER MEMORY,
AS IF IT WERE
A PRECIOUS
JEWEL.

HE ACHES FOR HER.
HE REMEMBERS
THE VELVET CARESS
OF HER HAND, THE
SMELL OF HER SKIN.
HE REMEMBERS
HER EYES. SO DARK,
YET SO LUMINES-
CENT...

WANDA...
I FAILED...

I'M
SORRY...

AND HE IMAGINES
NEVER SEEING
THOSE EYES AGAIN,
NEVER AGAIN
HEARING HER
LAUGH. ONCE AGAIN,
AL SIMMONS
UNDERSTANDS
DAMNATION.

WANDA...



HELLSPAWN...

I'M
SORRY.



I'VE
BEEN
SENT
FOR
YOU.



THEY'RE
WAITING.





WHAT IS THIS PLACE? HOW DO I GET OUT OF HERE?

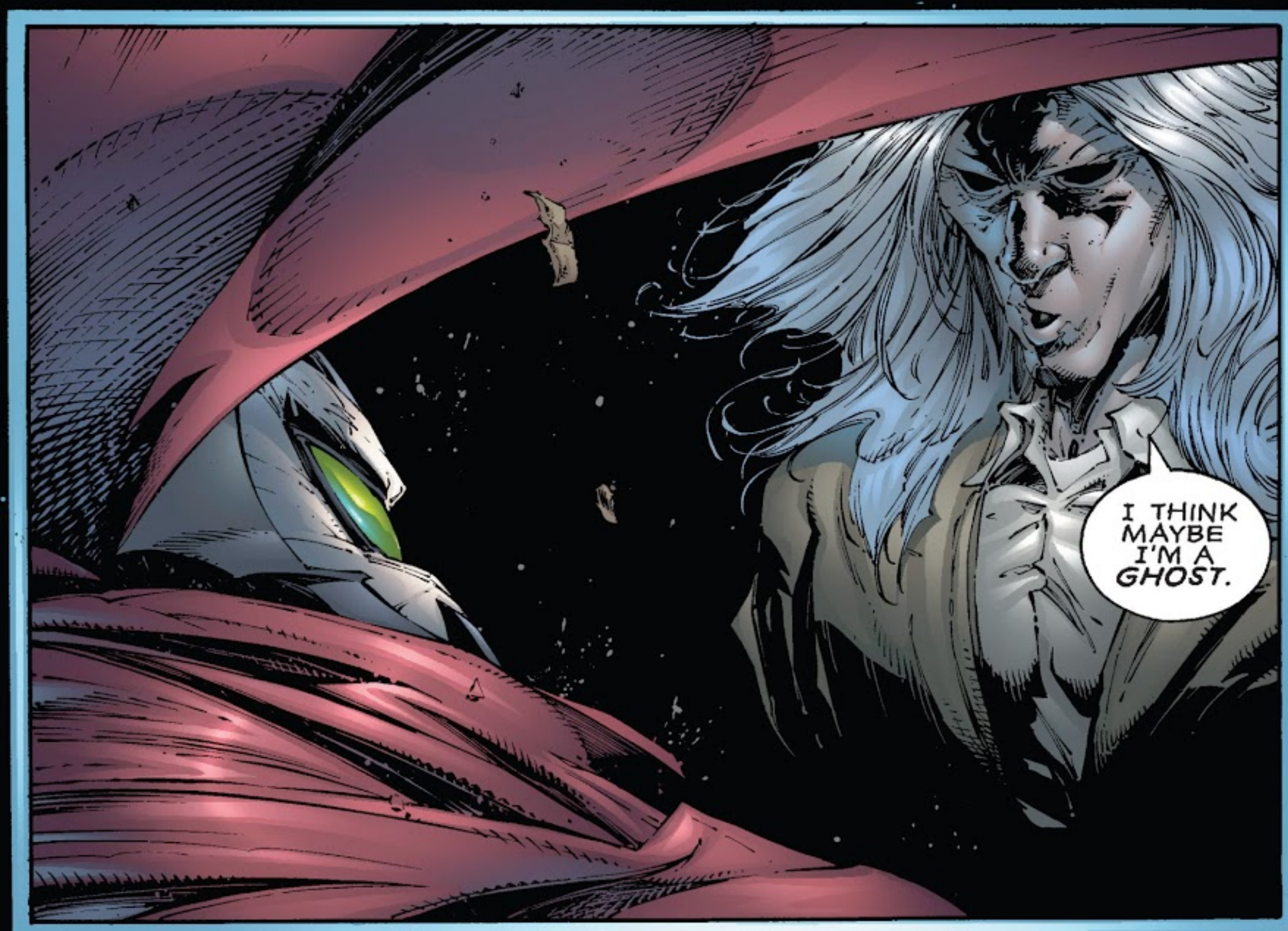
GOOD QUESTION.



IF I KNEW THAT, I WOULDN'T BE HERE. YOU'RE OUTTA LUCK, I'M AFRAID.

WHO ARE YOU?

I'M NOT SURE. MY NAME USED TO BE **EDDIE BECKETT**, BUT I DON'T THINK THAT'S WHO I AM ANYMORE.



I THINK MAYBE I'M A GHOST.

I USED
TO BE A **MAN**.
MAYBE NOT
MUCH OF ONE.
I WAS A BUM.
DIED IN AN
ALLEYWAY
HOLDING A
PILE OF THIS
WEIRD GREEN
GOO.

NEXT
THING I
KNOW, SOME
TOXIC **BEAST**
STARTS
STAKING A
CLAIM ON
MY BODY. *

IT STRIPPED
OFF THE FLESH
FROM MY BONES,
BURNED THE
BLOOD FROM MY
VEINS. THAT'S A
BITCH, I CAN
TELL YOU. BUT
PART OF ME
REMAINED.

I GUESS
I'M THE
LEFTOVERS.
THE SCRAPS.
STORY OF
MY LIFE.

THAT
"WEIRD
GREEN GOO"--
IT MUST HAVE
BEEN **NECRO-
PLASM**... IT
WAS PART
OF ME...

GUESS
THAT
MAKES US
BLOOD
BROTHERS,
huh?

* LAST
ISSUE.



ANYWAY,
I'M SORRY
ABOUT ALL
THIS. REALLY.
I NEVER
WANTED TO
HURT NOBODY.
THAT'S THE
TRUTH.

NO HARD
FEELINGS,
huh? I MEAN,
I'M JUST THE
MESSENGER.

WHAT DO YOU
MEAN? WHOSE
MESSENGER?
MALEBOLGIA'S?



YOU'LL FIND
OUT SOON
ENOUGH. LISTEN,
IF IT MAKES YOU
FEEL ANY BETTER,
I'M SURE YOU
PROBABLY DON'T
DESERVE ANY
OF THIS.

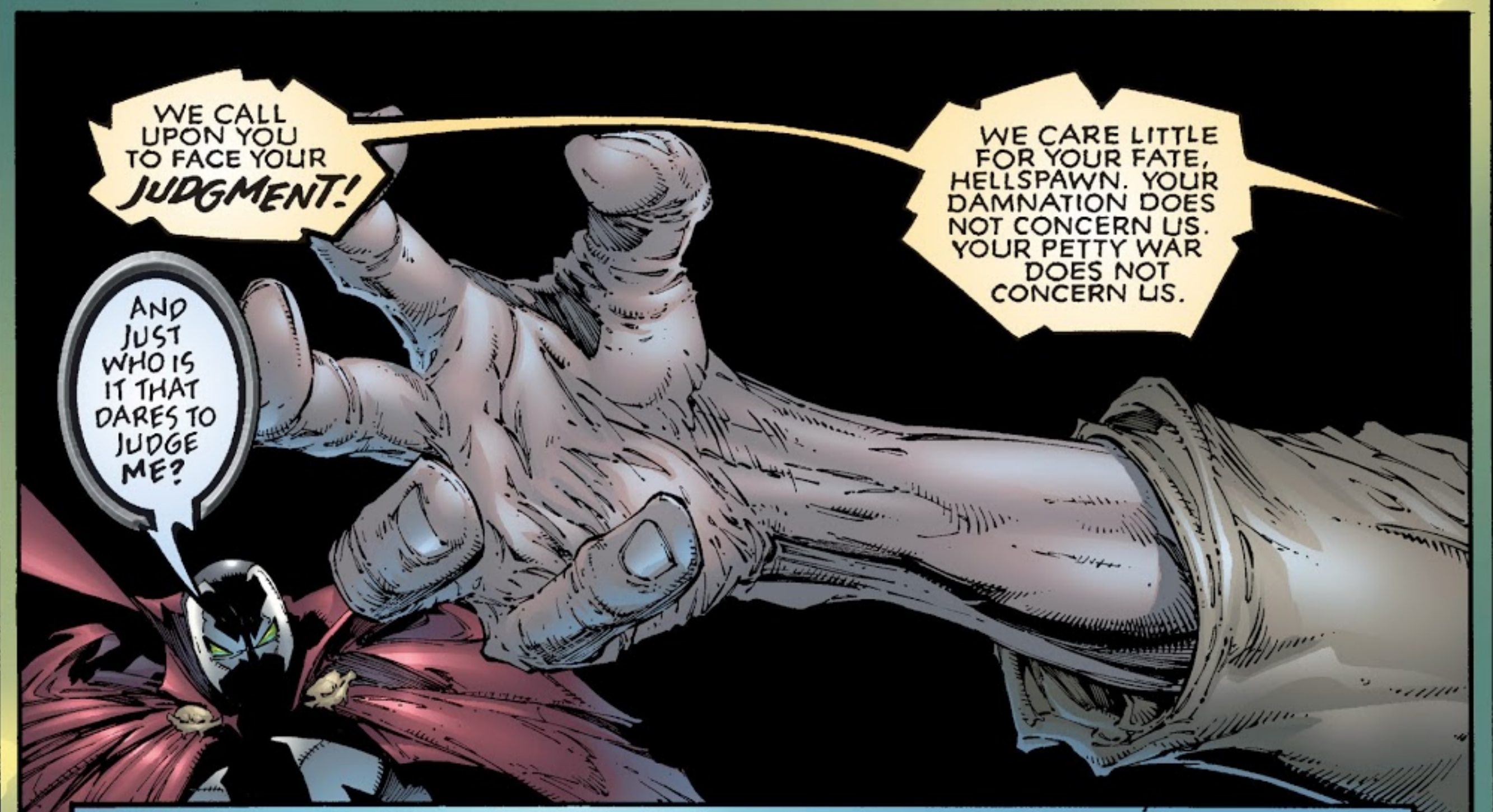
NOT THAT
IT WILL
MAKE ANY
DIFFERENCE...

DAMMIT!
WHAT ARE
YOU TALKING
ABOUT?

I GOTTA
GO. THEY'RE
CALLING FOR
YOU. GOOD
LU--

**HELL-
SPAWN!**
WE CALL FOR
YOU UPON THIS
VERDANT
HOUR...



A large, pale, mechanical hand with a jointed arm reaches down from the top of the frame, firmly grasping the head of a Hellspawn. The Hellspawn is shown from the chest up, wearing a red cape and a helmet with glowing yellow eyes. The background is dark and indistinct.

WE CALL
UPON YOU
TO FACE YOUR
JUDGMENT!

WE CARE LITTLE
FOR YOUR FATE,
HELLSPAWN. YOUR
DAMNATION DOES
NOT CONCERN US.
YOUR PETTY WAR
DOES NOT
CONCERN US.

AND
JUST
WHO IS
IT THAT
DARES TO
JUDGE
ME?

A close-up, high-contrast shot of the Hellspawn's face. The helmet is dark, and the glowing yellow eyes are the primary light source, casting a harsh light on the surrounding red fabric of the cape.

BUT YOU ARE
A THREAT TO OUR
WELL-BEING. A
THREAT WHICH WILL
NOT BE TOLERATED.
A THREAT WHICH
WILL BE
NEUTRALIZED.

FOLLOW
THE **LIGHT**,
HELLSPAWN.
THE **EMERALD
PARLIAMENT**
IS WAITING.

I'M NOT
FOLLOWING
ANYTHING TILL
SOMEONE
EXPLAINS
WHAT'S GOING
ON.

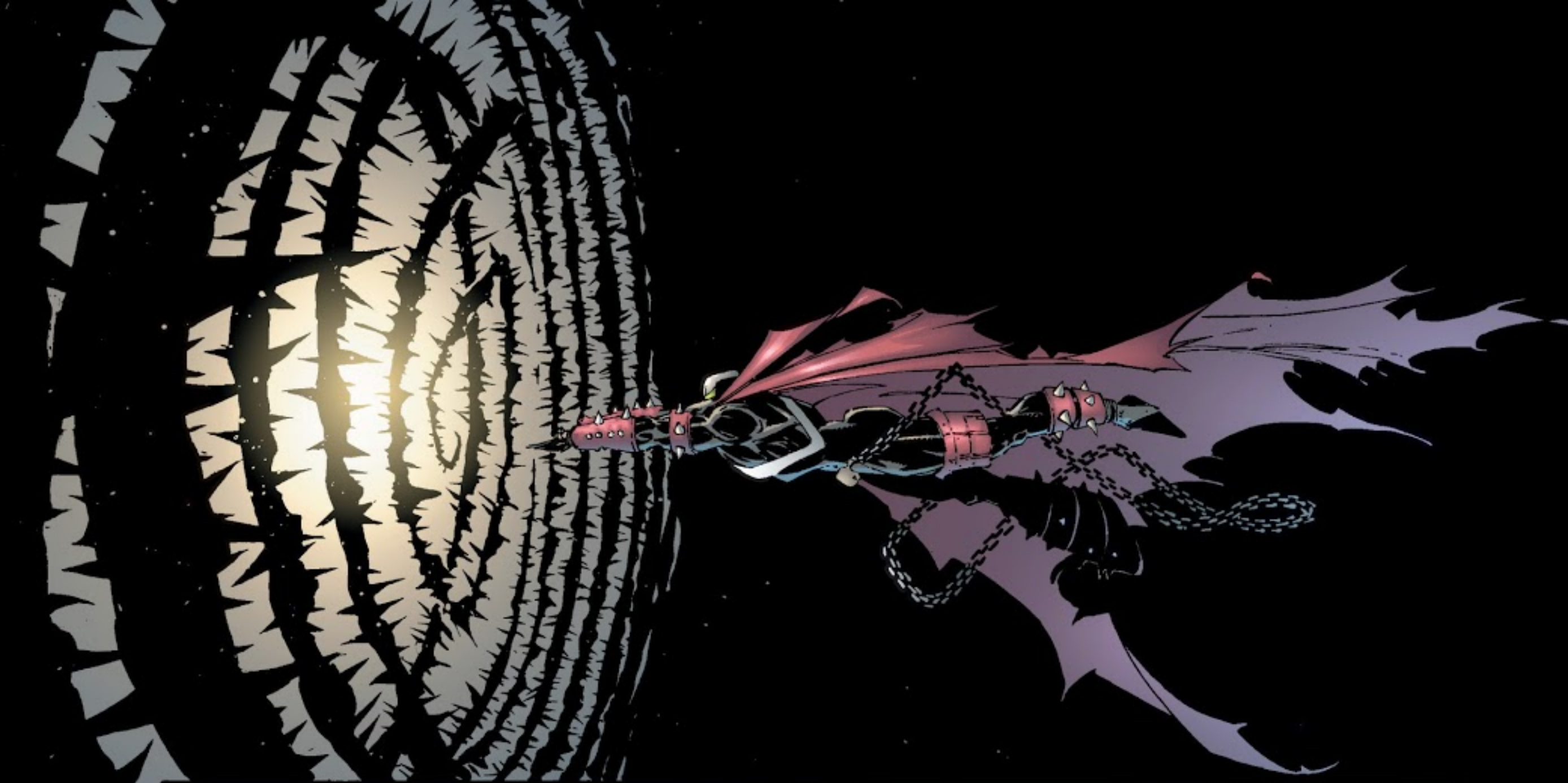
The Hellspawn is shown from the back, standing in a dark, cavernous space. They are surrounded by a large pile of red, torn fabric or debris. In the background, a figure with long white hair and a yellow robe points towards the Hellspawn. A single bright light source is visible in the distance.

YOU HAVE
NO CHOICE. THIS
IS OUR **DOMAIN**,
FREE FROM THE
TAINTS OF BOTH
HEAVEN AND
HELL. YOU HAVE
NO POWER
HERE.

THE HOUR
OF RECKONING
IS UPON YOU,
HELLSPAWN.
COME.



THERE.



CONTINUED...



75

DIGITAL
EDITION

SPAWN



Capilla
-40

McFARLANE
DAN U

IS THIS
HOW IT
FEELS? TO
EMERGE
FROM THE
STILL
WOMB OF
DARKNESS...



TO GAZE
UPON THE
SLOWLY
OPENING
EYE OF
CREATION...



FLOATING IN
LIQUID NIGHT.
WEIGHTLESS.
TIMELESS.



PASSING
BEYOND
THE VEILS
OF LIFE AND
DEATH...



MOVING TOWARDS
THE DAWNING
LIGHT, LEAVING
THE FADING
SHADOWS OF THE
PAST BEHIND...



IS THIS
HOW IT
FEELS...



... TO **BE**
BORN
AGAIN?

WH-
WHERE
AM
I?

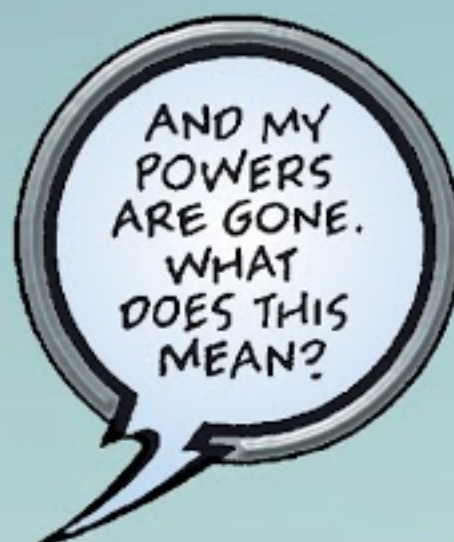




WHAT'S THIS...?

THE SIGIL. THE SYMBOL OF MY SERVITUDE TO MALEBOLGIA. MY LINK TO HELL.

IT'S... DEAD.



AND MY POWERS ARE GONE. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

THE AIR IS FRAGRANT, SUN-LIGHT STREAMING THROUGH THE HEAVY, POLLEN-DUSTED AIR.



IN THE DISTANCE, A THOUSAND BIRDSONGS HARMONIZE INTO AN IMPROMPTU SYMPHONY. LIFE SPRINGS FORTH FROM EVERY INCH OF THIS DEEP, RICH EARTH.

AMID THIS RIPE GREEN ENVIRONMENT, SPAWN MOVES LIKE A SHADOW THROUGH A DREAM.

AND SOMEHOW, HIS DARK HEART IS LIFTED. THIS FEELS RIGHT. THIS FEELS LIKE HOME.



HE ALLOWS HIMSELF TO FEEL AS HE HASN'T FELT IN FAR TOO LONG:

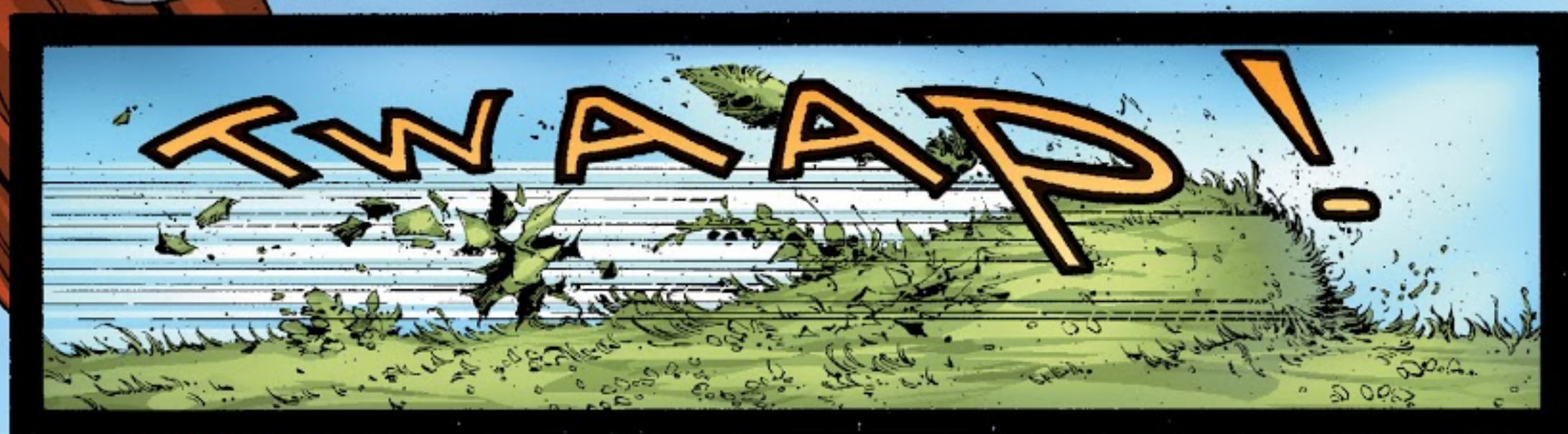
FREE.

AT PEACE.



I DON'T UNDER-
STAND...
AM I...
IS THIS...

...IS THIS
HEAVEN?



NO,
HELLSPAWN.
THIS IS NOT
HEAVEN.

THIS IS
PARADISE!

AND
YOU
ARE A
VIPER
IN OUR
GARDEN!



KRAK-A-THOR!

NEW YORK.
THE ALLEYS
OF RAT
CITY.

IT'S
HAPPENING,
ISN'T IT? SOON
IT'S REALLY
GOING TO START
HITTING THE
FAN-- BY THE
BUCKET
FULL!

COGLIOSTRO!
COULD YOU
PLEASE SHUT UP
FOR ONCE AND
HELP ME THINK
OF SOME-
THING!

LIKE
WHAT? I
DON'T KNOW
ABOUT YOU,
HALO BOY, BUT
STEMMING OFF
ARMAGEDDON
FALLS WAY OUT-
SIDE MY
SPHERE OF
INFLUENCE.

YOU KNOW THE
SCORE AS WELL AS I
DO: SPAWN DIES, HELL
RISES AND THE **FINAL**
BATTLE BEGINS. THIS
STUFF'S ALL WRITTEN
IN **STONE**.

WE **BOTH** SAW THAT
LUMBERING TRASH **HEAP**
SWALLOW HIM WHOLE.*
WE COULDN'T **SAVE**
HIM.

BUT
THAT'S JUST
IT. I CAN'T
DETECT THE
HELLSPAWN'S
ESSENCE AT ALL.
HE'S NOT IN
HEAVEN **OR**
HELL.

WHAT
ARE YOU
SAYING?

I'M
SAYING
HE'S
GONE.

VANISHED.

* LAST ISSUE.



Kaff
Kaff!

BOOTS...
WHAT
THE HELL'S
GOING
ON?



ONE
MINUTE
IT'S HOTTER'N
HADES AND THE
NEXT MINUTE
I'M WAITING
FOR AN **ARK**
TO GO BY.

ALL THIS
RAIN WASHED
US OUTTA OUR
BOXES. GOT NO
PLACE TO
SLEEP.

YEAH.

FRIGGIN'
RAIN.



BOBBY...
GUYS... LISTEN.
THERE'S SOMETHING
GOING ON THAT I
CAN'T EXPLAIN, AND
I'M NOT SURE HOW
IT'S GOING TO END.
BUT IT'S PRETTY
SERIOUS.

I DON'T
WANT TO
SCARE
ANYONE BUT
I HAVE TO
ASK...



Ah, KNOCK
IT OFF, BOOTS...
SAVE THE CHURCH
TALK FOR THE OLD
LADIES AT THE
SOUP KITCHEN.

ARE YOU
READY TO MEET
YOUR END? DO
YOU HAVE THE
AFFAIRS OF
YOUR **SOUL** IN
ORDER?



ME, I'M
JUST
TRYIN'
TO KEEP
WARM.

Kaff!

BOBBY,
I'M DEADLY
SERIOUS HERE.
THERE MAY
NOT BE MUCH
TIME.



SUBURBAN
QUEENS.

DAMN.

YOU
SHOULD SEE
THIS, HONEY.
IT'S REALLY
COMING DOWN.
NEVER SEEN ANY-
THING QUITE
LIKE--



TERRY!
TERRY, COME
QUICK. IT'S
CYAN!



WANDA,
WHAT'S
WRONG?!

HONEY,
WHAT
IS IT?

CYAN. SHE'S
HAVING ONE
OF THOSE
SEIZURES
AGAIN.



COMEBACK...
COME BACK...
COMEBACK...
PLEASE COME
BACK...



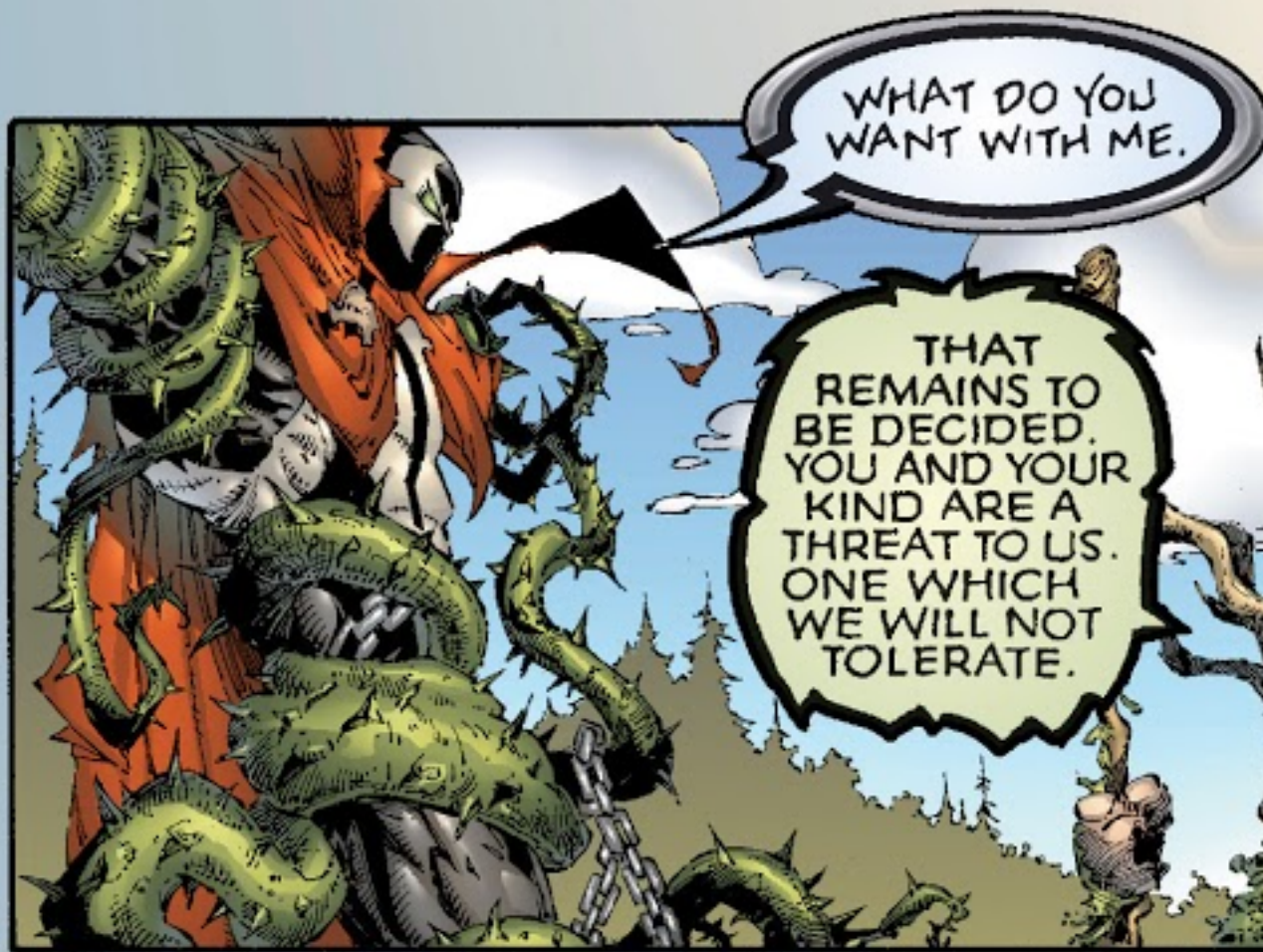
Mr. *SIMMONS*,
I PRESUME.

WHO
ARE
YOU?



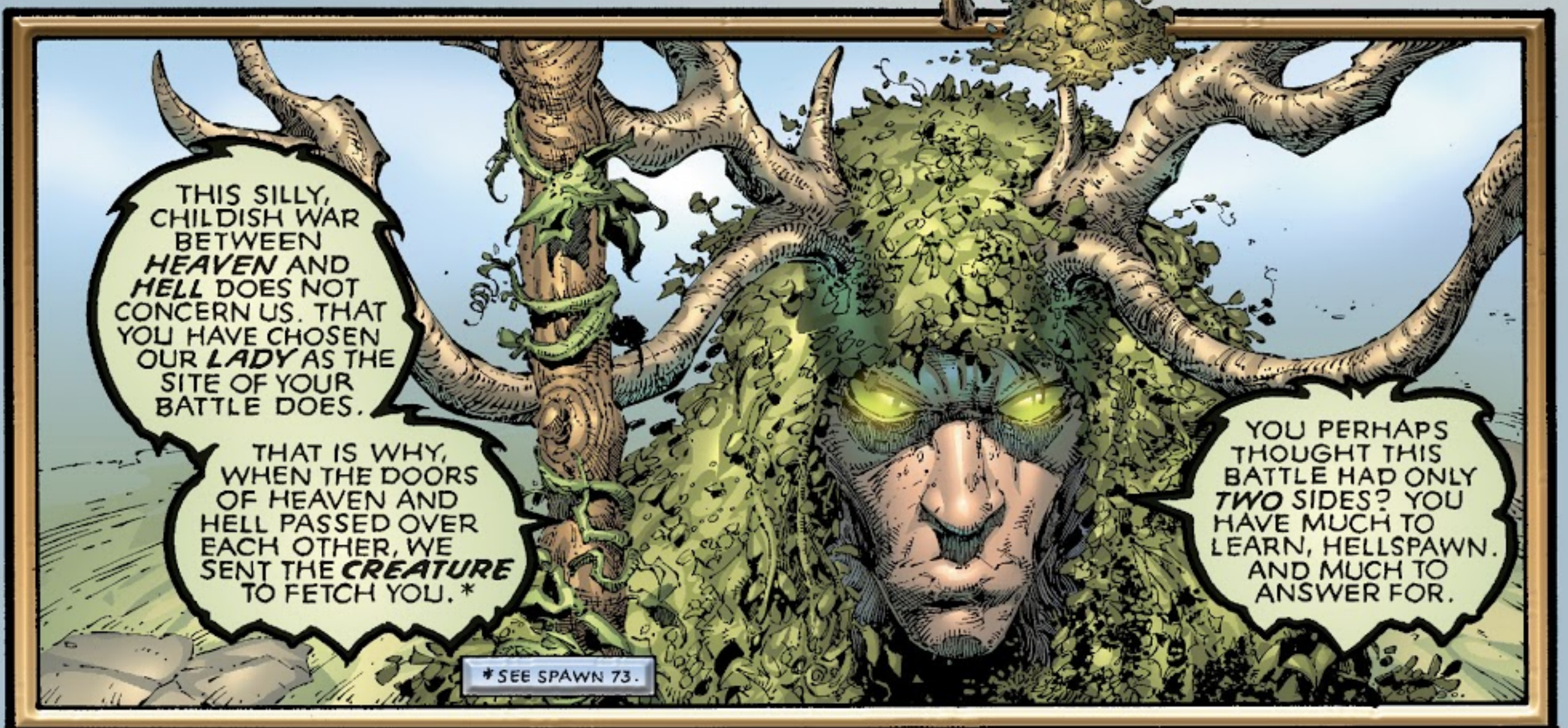
I AM CALLED
THE *KEEPER*, A
CHILD OF THE
GREENWORLD.
I SPEAK FOR THE
EMERALD
PARLIAMENT.

DO NOT
BOTHR TO
STRUGGLE. THE POWERS
OF *HELL* HAVE NO
PURCHASE HERE. YOUR
FATE IS ENTIRELY
IN OUR HANDS.



WHAT DO YOU
WANT WITH ME.

THAT
REMAINS TO
BE DECIDED.
YOU AND YOUR
KIND ARE A
THREAT TO US.
ONE WHICH
WE WILL NOT
TOLERATE.



THIS SILLY,
CHILDISH WAR
BETWEEN
HEAVEN AND
HELL DOES NOT
CONCERN US. THAT
YOU HAVE CHOSEN
OUR *LADY* AS THE
SITE OF YOUR
BATTLE DOES.

THAT IS WHY,
WHEN THE DOORS
OF HEAVEN AND
HELL PASSED OVER
EACH OTHER, WE
SENT THE *CREATURE*
TO FETCH YOU. *

YOU PERHAPS
THOUGHT THIS
BATTLE HAD ONLY
TWO SIDES? YOU
HAVE MUCH TO
LEARN, *HELLSPAWN*.
AND MUCH TO
ANSWER FOR.

* SEE SPAWN 73.



HEAVEN AND HELL WAGE AN ENDLESS, MEANINGLESS WAR OVER THE COLLECTION OF **SOULS**. SUCH HUBRIS.

DO YOU IMAGINE THAT **MAN** IS THE ONLY CREATURE TO POSSESS A SOUL? THAT YOUR PETTY SQUABBLING SHOULD TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER ALL OTHER LIFE?



WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH ME? WHY AM I HERE?



IT IS NOT OUR WAY TO INFLICT PAIN WITHOUT REASON. YOU ARE HERE TO **LEARN**. SO THAT PERHAPS YOU MAY STOP THIS MADNESS AND SAVE YOUR RACE.

YOU SHALL KNOW THE SUFFERING THAT HAS BEEN INFLICTED ON OUR WORLD BY YOUR KIND.

YOU SHALL BE MADE **AWARE**.

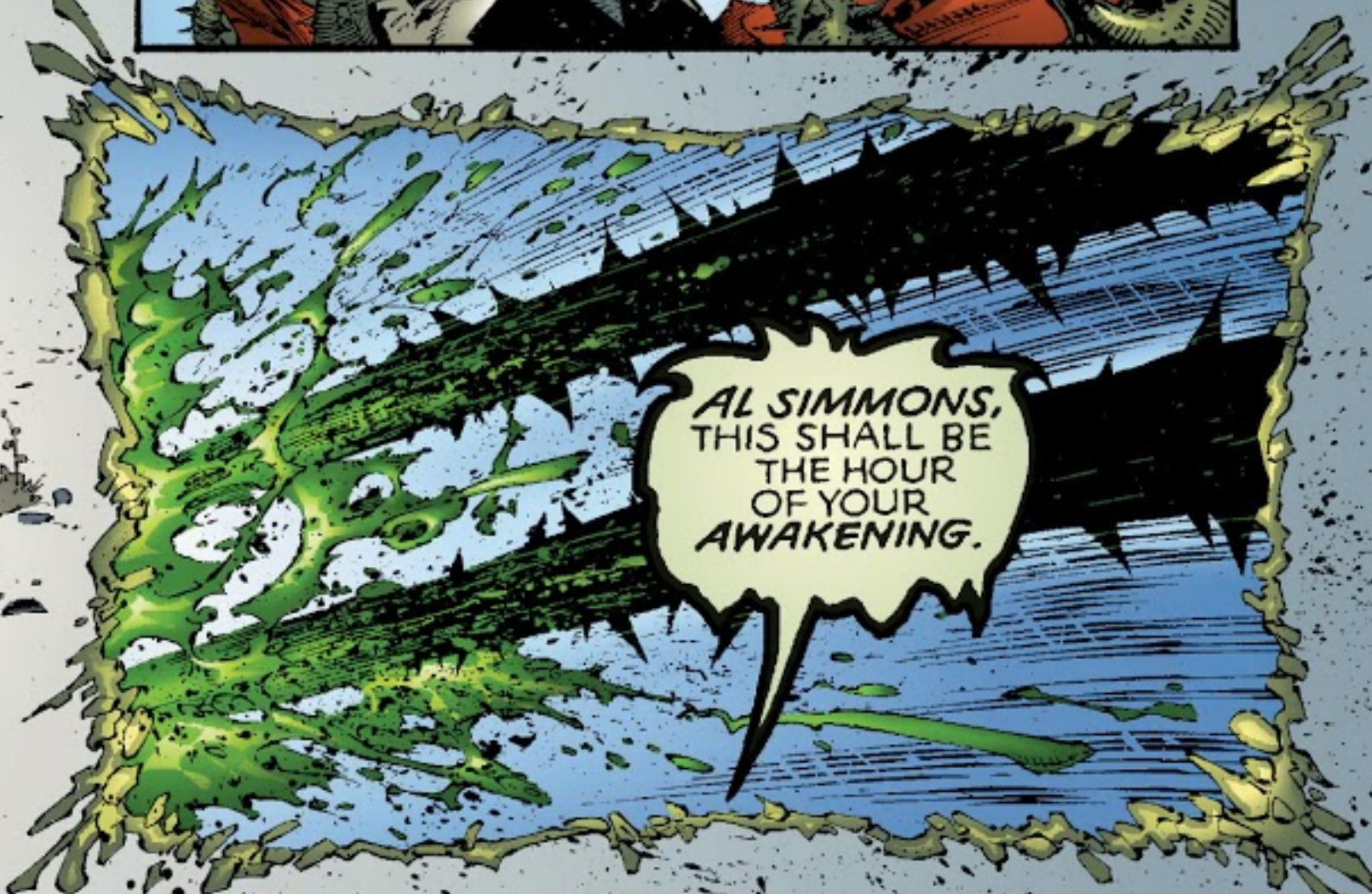


UGGHN!



AND THESE LESSONS WILL NOT COME EASY.

AIEEE!



AL SIMMONS, THIS SHALL BE THE HOUR OF YOUR AWAKENING.

THE SCENE SHIFTS.
A PORTENT OF
THINGS TO COME.

TWO ARMIES POISED FOR ONE
LAST, GREAT BATTLE. ONE WHICH
THREATENS TO SHAKE THIS
DELICATE, MOSSY STONE
CALLED EARTH TO PIECES.

HE UNDERSTANDS NOW THAT THERE IS A
THIRD POWER BEYOND HEAVEN AND HELL,
THIS REALM OF THE GREENWORLD.

A PLANET, ALIVE AND SENTIENT,
TEEMING WITH LIFE FORMS OF
EVERY IMAGINABLE DESCRIPTION,
AT THE MERCY OF ONE RECKLESS,
ARROGANT SPECIES.

SPAWN CAN FEEL THIS WORLD'S ANGUISH.
THE TOXIC WASH OF HER SEAS, THE OPEN
WOUNDS THAT CUT THROUGH HER ONCE LUSH
FORESTS.

EVEN THE NURTURING RAIN NOW
BRINGS A POISONOUS KISS.



SHE CANNOT ALLOW THIS
BATTLE TO COME TO PASS.
SHE WILL ELIMINATE THE
PRIZE BEFORE THE BATTLE
BEGINS, RENDER THE
CONTEST MOOT.

A NEW STRAIN OF ROGUE
MICROBES CAST OUT ON
THE SUMMER WIND, A FEW
DEGREES CHANGE IN
TEMPERATURE IN EITHER
DIRECTION...

...AND THERE WILL
BE NO HUMANS'
SOULS OVER
WHICH TO VIE FOR
POSSESSION

AND THEN A FINAL VISION.

A RADIANT FIGURE,
RISING LIKE A PHOENIX
FROM THE ASHES OF
FOLLY, BRINGING AN
END TO THE WAR
BETWEEN HEAVEN
AND HELL.

FORGING A NEW PEACE,
A NEW DESTINY.

A MIDDLE PATH
BEYOND PAIRS
OF OPPOSITES.

AND THEN THE
VISIONS SHIMMER
AND FADE, LIKE
SHEETS OF RAIN
ON GLASS.

ECHOING
ACROSS
WORLDS.



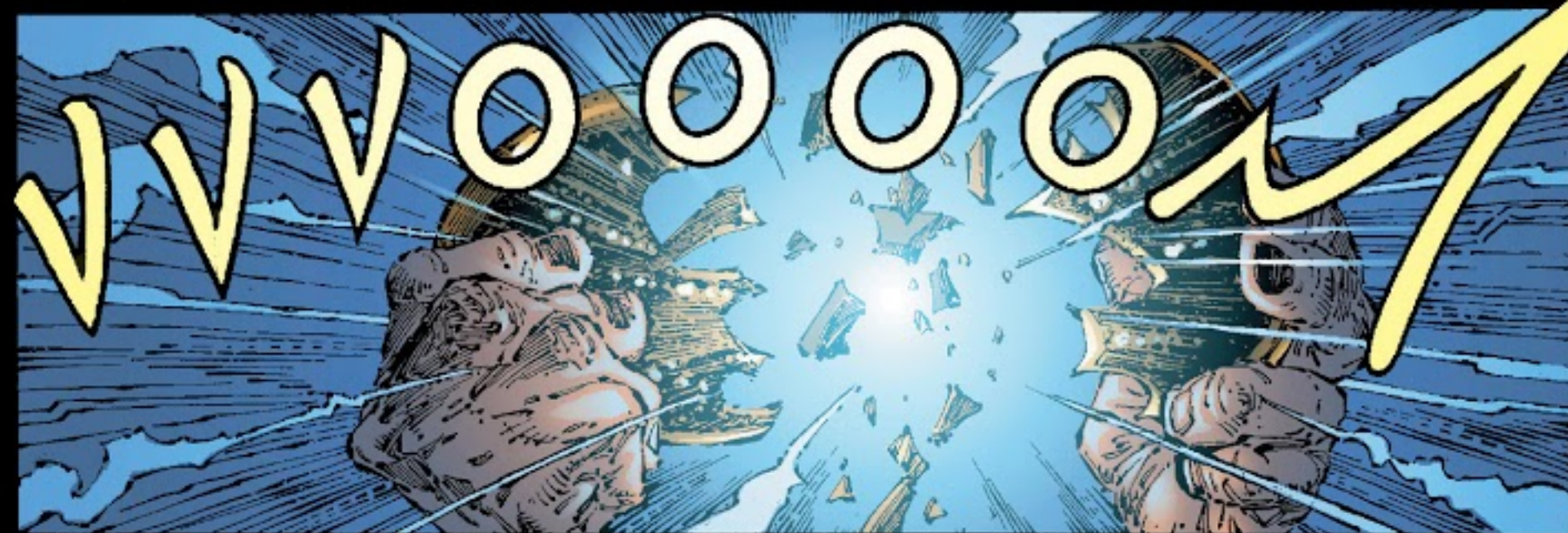
SACRIFICING
FOR ANOTHER.

SOMETHING
YOU WOULDN'T
UNDERSTAND.

I JUST
PRAY
THIS
WORKS.

Stay
wile
wile
wile

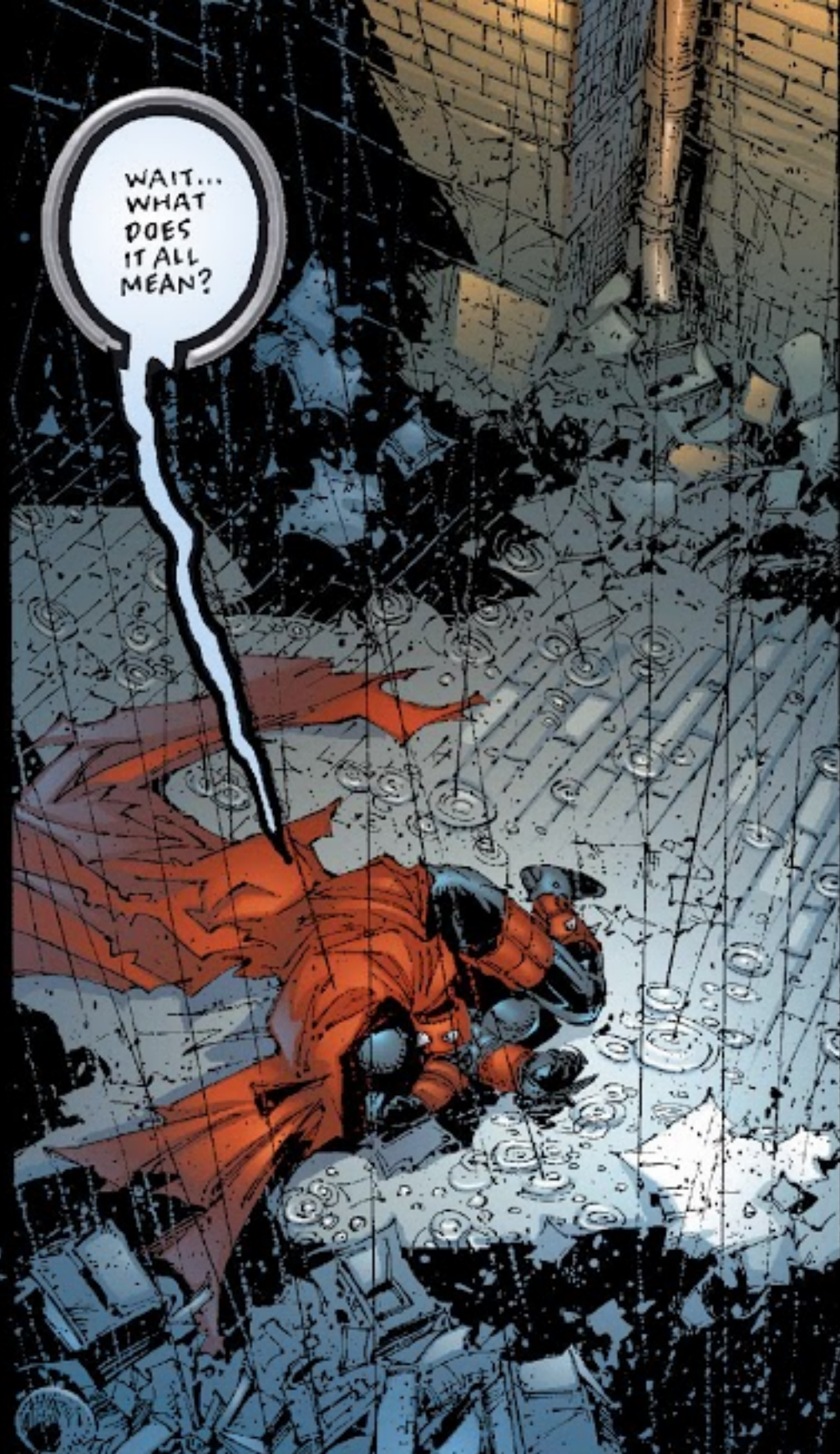
YOU WILL
KNOW THE
SOUL OF YOUR
WORLD BETTER
NOW, HELLSPAWN.
I DOUBT IT IS
A GIFT YOU
WILL BE
GLAD OF.



CYAN?

HOME.







BELAZIKKAL!
YOU HAVE BROKEN
THE COVENANT OF
ANGELIC COUNCIL.
YOU HAVE INTERFERED
IN THE LIVES OF
MORTALS.

YOU
HAVE GIVEN AID
TO THE RENEGADE
HELLSPAWN.

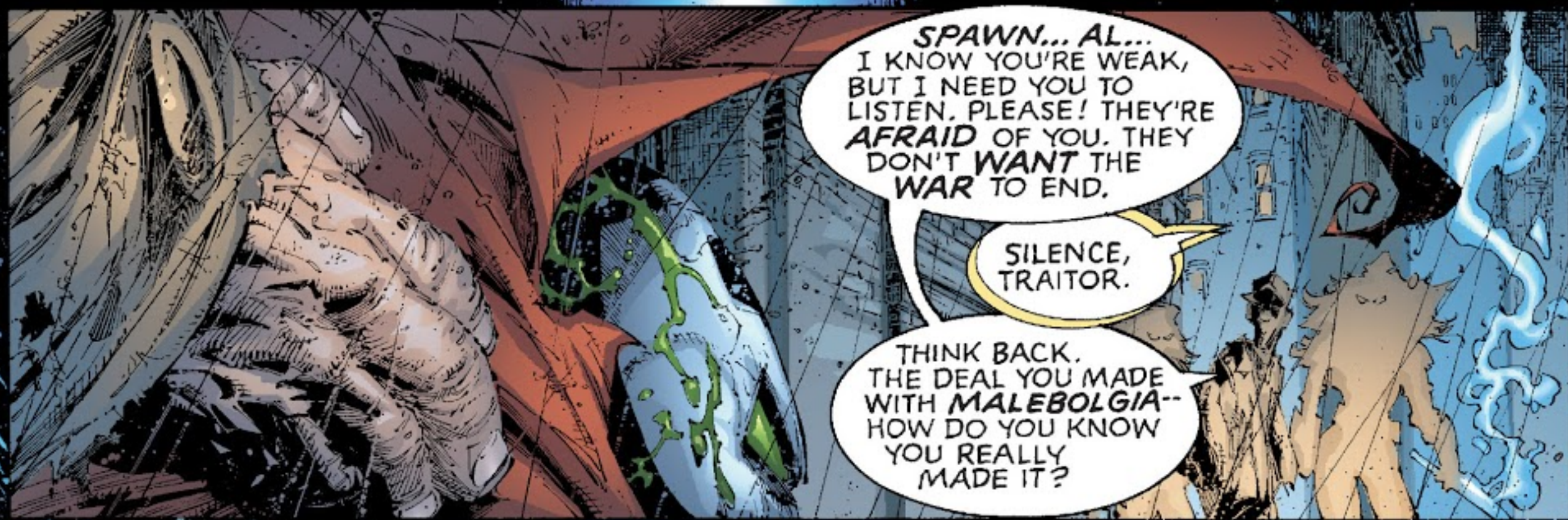
YOU ARE
UNWORTHY OF
THE NAME OF
ANGEL! YOU
SHALL COME
WITH US AND
FACE THE
**SERAPHIC
TRIBUNAL!**



**JEEZUS
H. CHRIST!**
WHAT'S
GOING
ON?!



I DID ONLY
WHAT I THOUGHT
WAS RIGHT. I CAN
DO NO MORE.



SPAWN... AL...
I KNOW YOU'RE WEAK,
BUT I NEED YOU TO
LISTEN. PLEASE! THEY'RE
AFRAID OF YOU. THEY
DON'T WANT THE
WAR TO END.

SILENCE,
TRAITOR.

THINK BACK.
THE DEAL YOU MADE
WITH **MALEBOLGIA**--
HOW DO YOU KNOW
YOU REALLY
MADE IT?



WHAT?
I WAS
THERE... I
REMEMBER
IT...



BUT
HOW DO
YOU
KNOW?

SILENCE!

THERE WILL
COME A CHILD,
AL SIMMONS.

YOU MUST
LOOK TO THE
CHILD.

PHOOOON!



No!!
BOOTSY!
COME BACK!
AL! DO SOME-
THING!

A
CHILD...?

IS THIS HOW IT FEELS?

TO BE CAST OUT OF
PARADISE...

...TO BE
ABANDONED TO
A **DARKNESS**
OF YOUR OWN
MAKING?

TOO WEAK
EVEN TO STAND,
SPAWN SHUDDERS
IN THE DIM LIGHT
OF THE ALLEYS,
THE WEIGHT OF
WORLDS UPON
HIS SHOULDERS.

AND THEN THE
VOICES COME.
THOUSANDS OF
VOICES ECHOING
THROUGH HIS HEAD.

FULL OF DESPERATION.
FEAR. HATRED.
FROM EVERY
CORNER OF THE CITY,
THEY SCREAM AT HIM.

SO MANY THAT
THEY THREATEN
TO DROWN HIM.

THE KEEPER'S WORDS
CAME BACK TO HAUNT
HIM: "YOU WILL KNOW
THE SOUL OF YOUR
WORLD BETTER NOW,
HELLSPAWN.

"I DOUBT IT IS A GIFT
YOU WILL BE GLAD OF."

THE PAIN OF THE CITY
IS ALIVE.

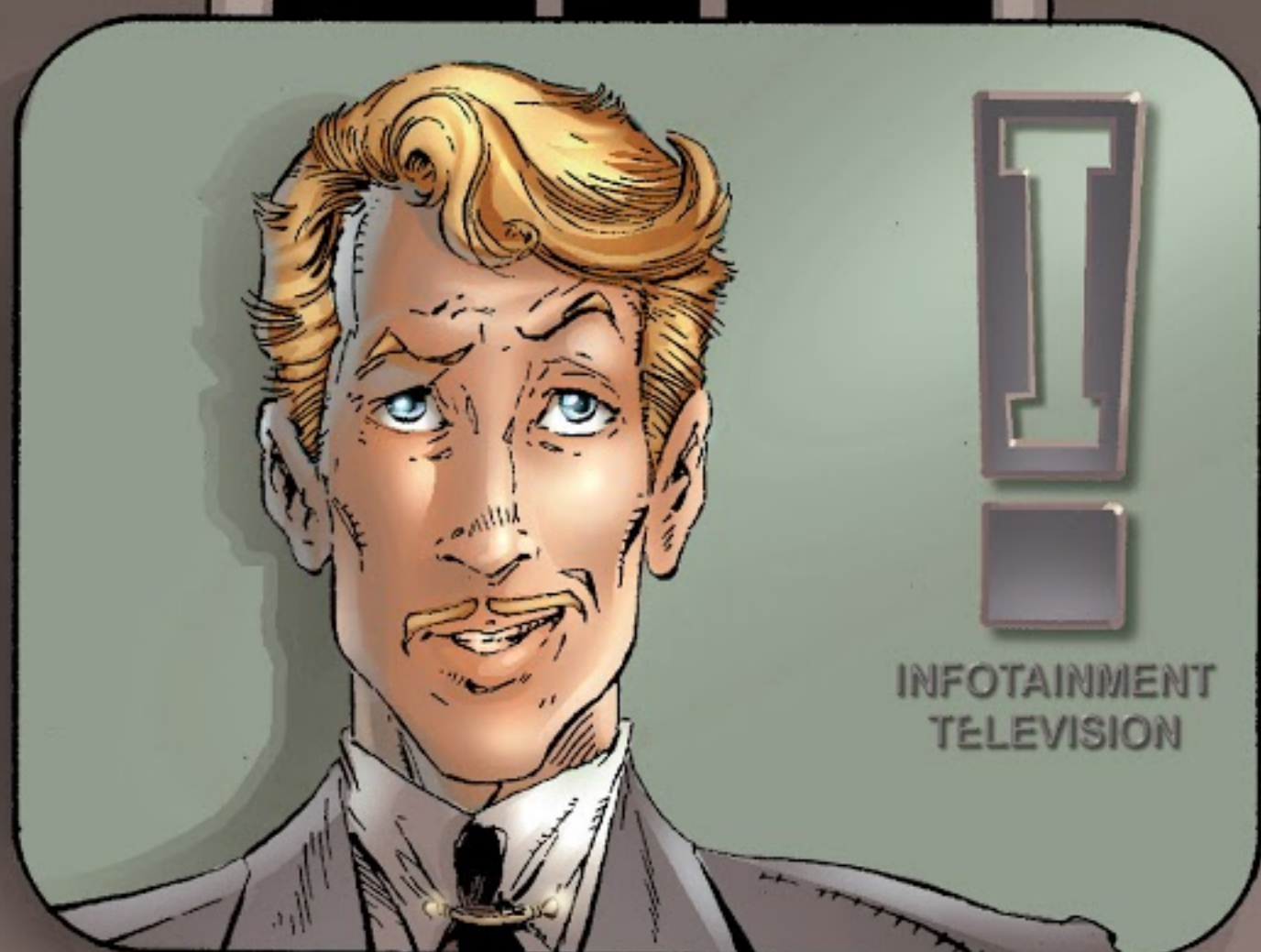
AND IT IS CALLING
OUT TO HIM.



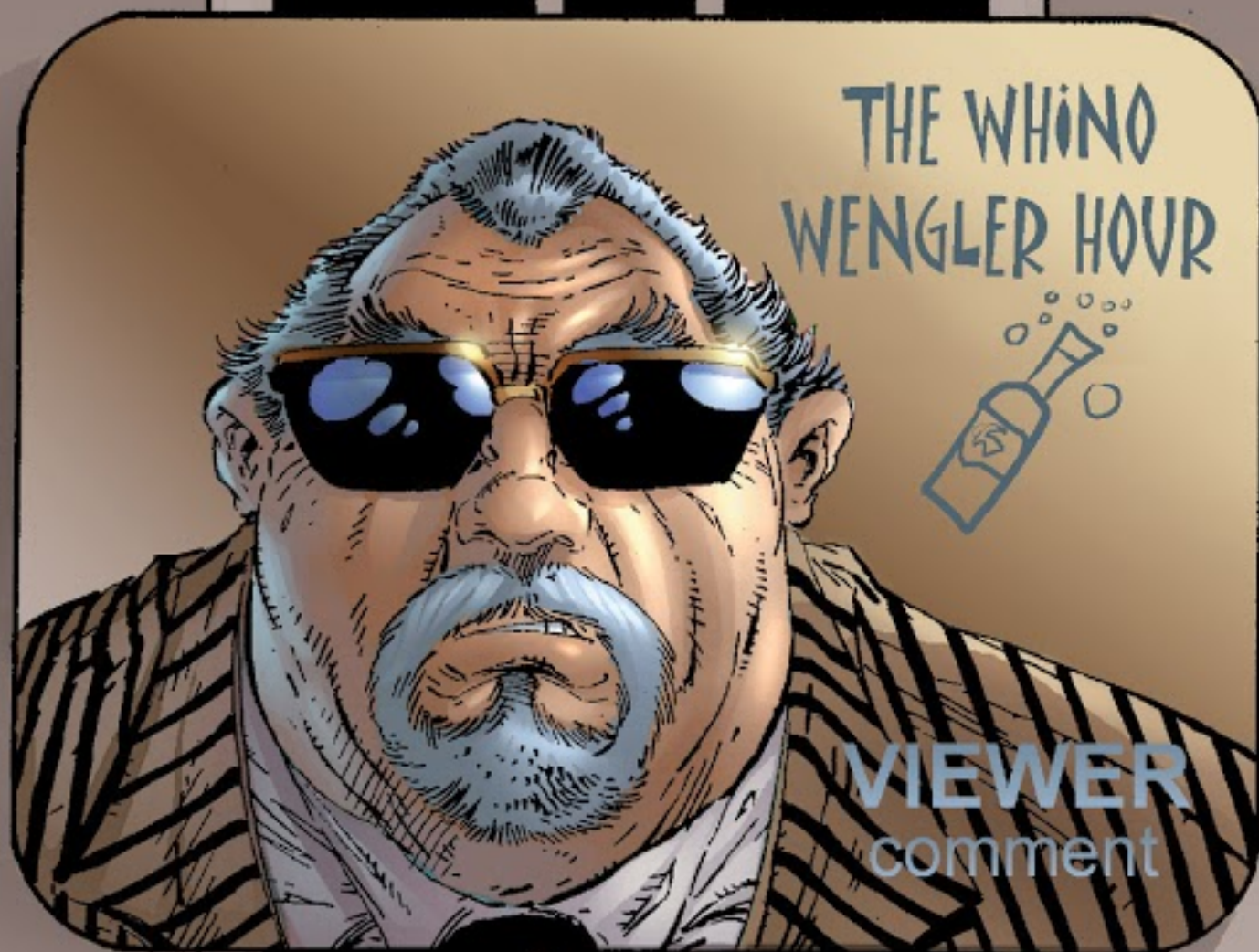


...FOLLOWING DAYS OF UNSEASON-
ABLE AND SOMETIMES DEADLY
HIGH TEMPERATURES, A VOLLEY OF
THUNDERSTORMS STRUCK THE
GREATER NEW YORK AREA YESTER-
DAY. RESIDENTS WERE CAUGHT COM-
pletely UNPREPARED AND PROPERTY
DAMAGE TOTALS ARE EXPECTED TO
BE WELL INTO THE MILLIONS OF
DOLLARS. THE GOVERNOR IS CONSID-
ERING PETITIONING WASHINGTON FOR
FEDERAL DISASTER RELIEF.

MEANWHILE, CLIMATOLOGISTS ARE
STILL AT A LOSS TO EXPLAIN THESE
EXTREMES IN WEATHER, PROMPTING
SEVERAL ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS
TO CALL FOR STEPPED-UP INVESTIGA-
TIONS INTO GLOBAL WARMING,
SPECIFICALLY THE EFFECTS OF
POLLUTION ON WORLD CLIMATE.



AT CENTRAL PARK'S SHAKESPEARE
FESTIVAL YESTERDAY, IT WAS A
CLEAR CASE OF LIFE TAKING STAGE
DIRECTIONS FROM ART. DURING
THE PERFORMANCE OF 'KING LEAR',
AN ACTUAL TEMPEST BROKE OUT
RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE
FAMOUS "STORM UPON THE
HEATH" SCENE. AFTER THE HEAVY
DOWNPOUR NEARLY SWEEPED THE
ACTORS FROM THE STAGE AND
LIGHTNING STRUCK THE RIGGINGS,
THE PRODUCTION WAS SHUT
DOWN. ACTRESS TARA BYRNE,
WHO PORTRAYED CORDELIA,
JOKINGLY REFERRED TO THE INCIDENT
AS "THE MOTHER OF ALL BAD
REVIEWS". STORM, RAGE THY BELLY
FULL.



SO TELL ME IF YOU SEE A *PATTERN*
HERE: A CATHOLIC NUN GOES ON A
KNIFE-WIELDING RAMPAGE AT THE
CHURCH OF THE IMMACULATE
HEART, SEVERELY WOUNDING THREE
OF HER FELLOW DEVOTEES BEFORE
BEING RESTRAINED. CLAIMING SHE
WAS POSSESSED BY "THE DEVIL",
SHE THREW HERSELF OFF A *THIRD*
STORY BALCONY BEFORE
AUTHORITIES COULD ARRIVE. AND
YESTERDAY, A 41-YEAR-OLD
ARBITRAGE BANKER SPOUTED SOME
GIBBERISH ABOUT THE APOCALYPSE
AND THEN BLEW HIS *BRAINS* OUT
IN FRONT OF A CARLOAD OF FELLOW
SUBWAY PASSENGERS. IS THIS MORE
OF THE SO-CALLED 'MILLENNIUM
FEVER' OR ARE THESE PEOPLE *ON*
TO SOMETHING?





76

DIGITAL
EDITION

SPAWN





"I WONDER WHAT HE SEES.
I WONDER HOW THINGS
MUST LOOK TO HIM SINCE
HE CAME BACK.

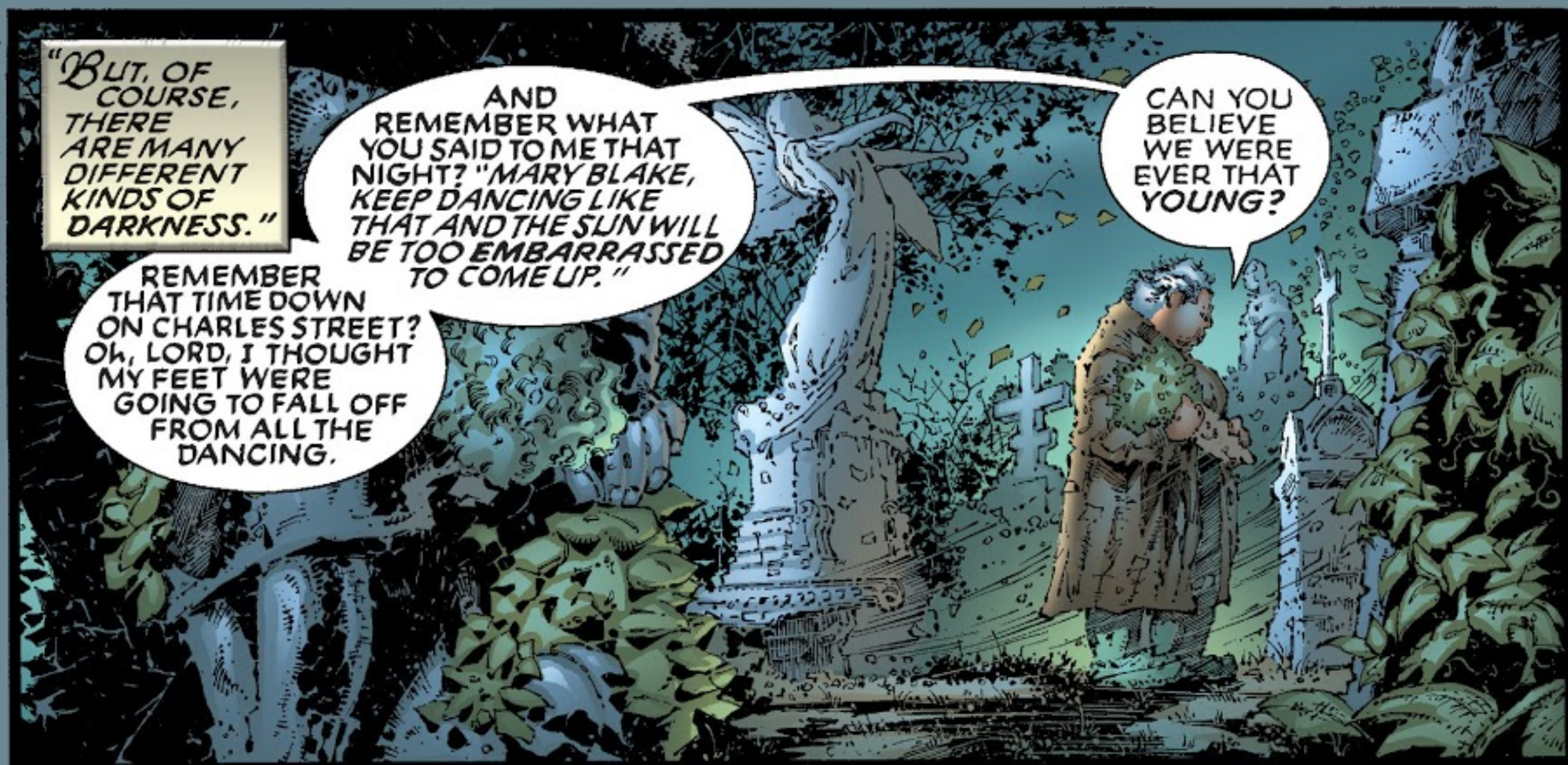
"IF THIS WORLD LOOKS
DIFFERENT AFTER YOU'VE
PASSED ON TO THE OTHER
SIDE. IF IT'S MORE
BEAUTIFUL.

"OR IF IT'S A
DISAPPOINTMENT.

"AND I WONDER WHAT HE SEES
WHEN HE CLOSES HIS EYES.
WHAT IT IS THAT HAUNTS HIM SO.

"WHAT THOSE
SECRETS
ARE THAT HE'S
SO SET ON
KEEPING TO
HIMSELF. I
CAN'T IMAGINE
HOW LONELY
IT MUST BE
FOR HIM.

"I SUPPOSE I
KNOW AS MUCH
AS ANYONE ABOUT
LIVING IN THE DARK.

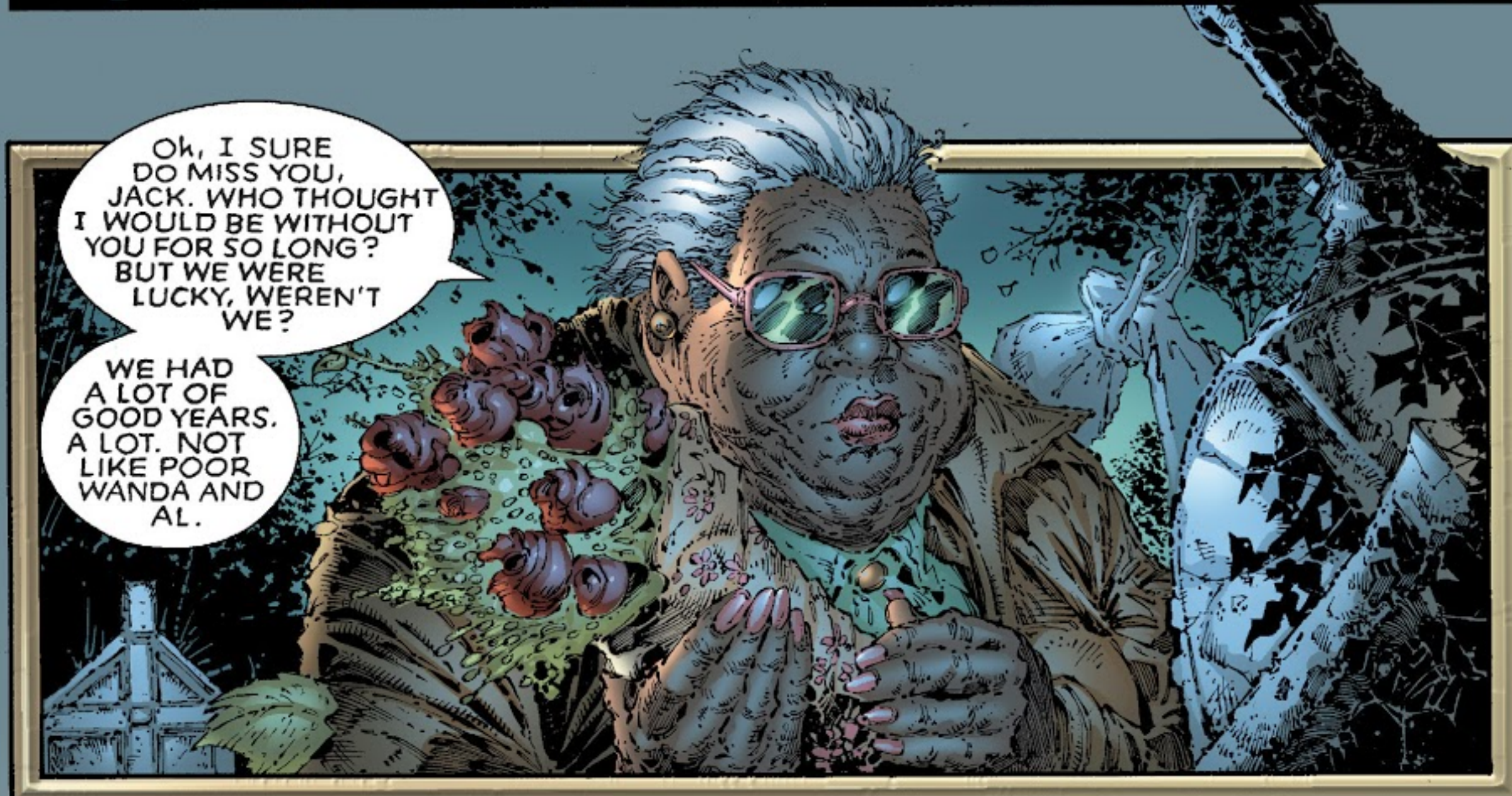


"BUT, OF COURSE, THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT KINDS OF DARKNESS."

AND REMEMBER WHAT YOU SAID TO ME THAT NIGHT? "MARY BLAKE, KEEP DANCING LIKE THAT AND THE SUN WILL BE TOO EMBARRASSED TO COME UP."

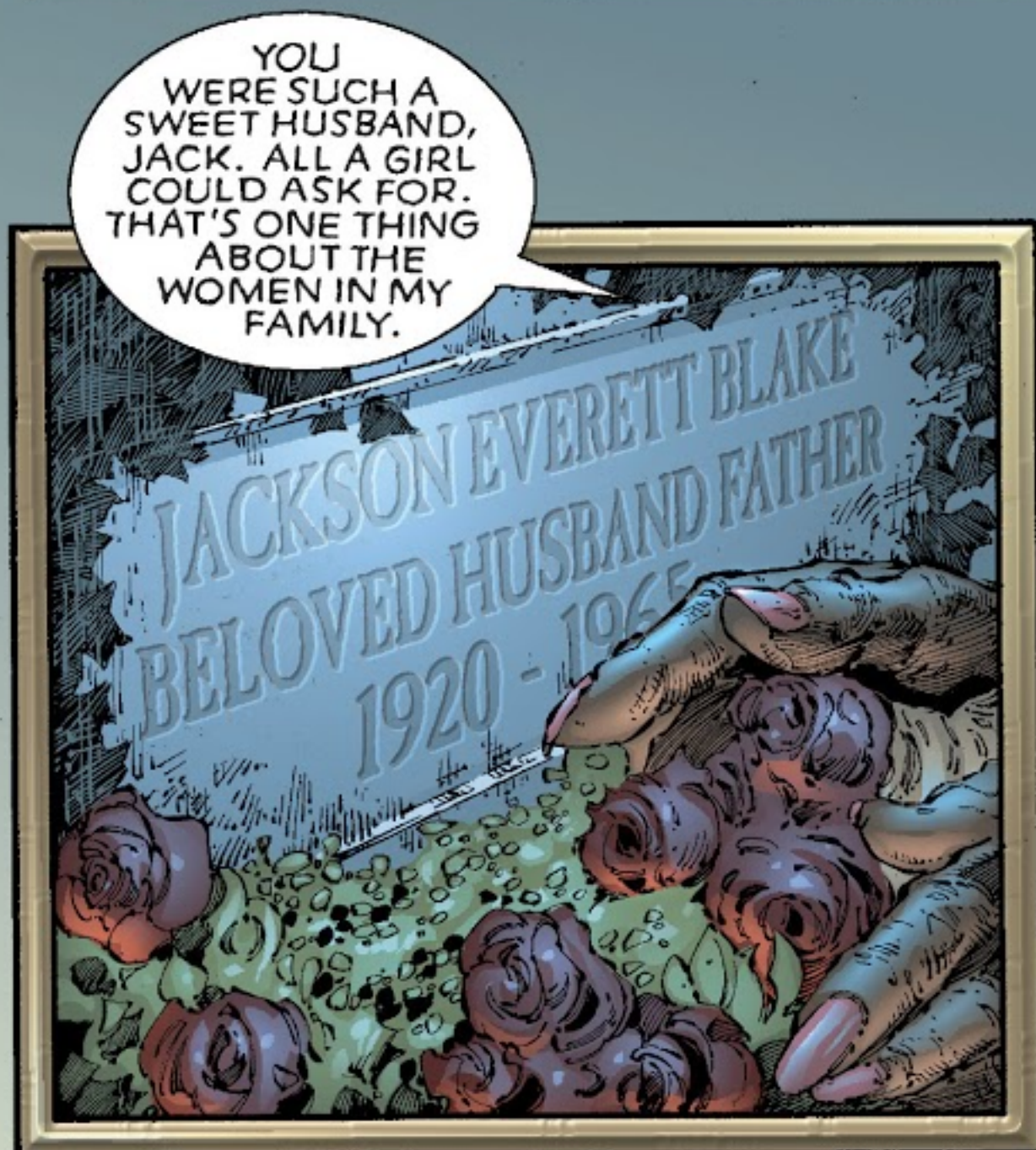
CAN YOU BELIEVE WE WERE EVER THAT YOUNG?

REMEMBER THAT TIME DOWN ON CHARLES STREET? OH, LORD, I THOUGHT MY FEET WERE GOING TO FALL OFF FROM ALL THE DANCING.



Oh, I SURE DO MISS YOU, JACK. WHO THOUGHT I WOULD BE WITHOUT YOU FOR SO LONG? BUT WE WERE LUCKY, WEREN'T WE?

WE HAD A LOT OF GOOD YEARS. A LOT. NOT LIKE POOR WANDA AND AL.



YOU WERE SUCH A SWEET HUSBAND, JACK. ALL A GIRL COULD ASK FOR. THAT'S ONE THING ABOUT THE WOMEN IN MY FAMILY.



WE ALWAYS KNEW A GOOD MAN WHEN WE SAW ONE.



GRANNY
BLAKE...?

IT'S OKAY,
AL. I KNOW
YOU'RE THERE...
YOU CAN COME
ON OUT
NOW.



YOU
SHOULDN'T
BE OUT ALONE
AFTER DARK.
IT'S NOT SAFE.

IT'S **ALL**
DARK TO ME,
HONEY. BESIDES,
I KNOW MY
GUARDIAN
ANGEL IS
LOOKING OUT
FOR ME.

NOW, TELL
GRANNY
BLAKE
WHAT'S
TROUBLING
YOU.

WHAT
DO YOU
MEAN?

I MAY
BE **BLIND**,
BUT I'M NO
FOOL. I CAN
HEAR IT IN YOUR
VOICE. NOW,
OUT WITH IT,
CHILD.

SOMETHING...
SOMETHING...
HAPPENED TO ME.
SOMETHING VERY
STRANGE. I DON'T HAVE
THE WORDS TO EXPLAIN
IT. BUT EVERYTHING'S
DIFFERENT.

I CAN
FEEL THE
WORLD, THE
CITY. LIKE IT'S
ALIVE. I CAN
FEEL YOUR SAD-
NESS. I
FOLLOWED
IT TO YOU.

"*HE'S ALWAYS
SO CRYPTIC.
ALWAYS HAS
BEEN. I KEEP
HOPING SOME-
DAY HE'LL
FINALLY OPEN
UP TO ME. TELL
ME ALL HIS
SECRETS.*"

I'M AFRAID
I'M **LOSING** MY-
SELF. I DON'T KNOW
WHAT FEELINGS
ARE MINE
ANYMORE.

AND NOW
I'M AFRAID
I'M STARTING TO
FORGET THINGS.
ABOUT MY
REAL LIFE.
THINGS
ABOUT...

...WANDA.

THERE'S SO
MUCH PAIN IN THIS
WORLD. I NEVER
KNEW. HOW COULD
ANY GOD EVER
ALLOW THIS?

HUSH
NOW! DON'T
BLASPHEME.
YOU OF ALL
PEOPLE. YOU'RE
JUST FEELING
SORRY FOR
YOURSELF.
AND THAT'S
OKAY.

"*EVERYONE NEEDS
SOMEONE TO
TALK TO ONCE IN A
WHILE. TO LISTEN
TO THEM. EVEN
ANGELS.*"



YOU LOST THE
WOMAN YOU LOVED.
YOU **DIED** AND CAME
BACK AND FOUND THAT
SHE'S MARRIED TO SOME-
ONE **ELSE** NOW.

SHE'S MOVED
ON BUT THAT
DOESN'T MEAN
SHE'S FORGOTTEN
YOU. WANDA'S MY
GRANDCHILD.
BELIEVE ME.
I KNOW.

SHE'S THE
ONLY THING I
EVER WANTED IN
MY LIFE, THE ONLY
THING THAT EVER
MADE SENSE. BUT
I'M FEELING LESS
AND LESS LIKE
THE MAN WHO
MARRIED HER.

EVERY DAY IT
FADES AWAY JUST
A LITTLE BIT MORE.
IT'S THE ONLY THING
I HAVE LEFT AND
I'M LOSING IT.

HORSE
FEATHERS.

WHAT?

HORSE
FEATHERS.

NONSENSE.

FOR
SOMEONE
SO BRIGHT,
THERE'S SURE
A LOT YOU DON'T
KNOW ABOUT
THE HEART.

LISTEN,
HONEY, DID
I EVER TELL
YOU ABOUT
ME AND
JACK?

"I REMEMBER IT LIKE IT WAS **YESTERDAY**. I KNOW EVERYONE SAYS THAT, BUT IT'S REALLY TRUE. IT WAS DURING THE **WAR**."

"THE DAY HE WALKED INTO THE DINER IT WAS LIKE A HONEY-SUCKLE BREEZE BLEW INTO MY LIFE. HE WAS SWEET AND KIND OF SHY, AND EVER SO **POLITE**."

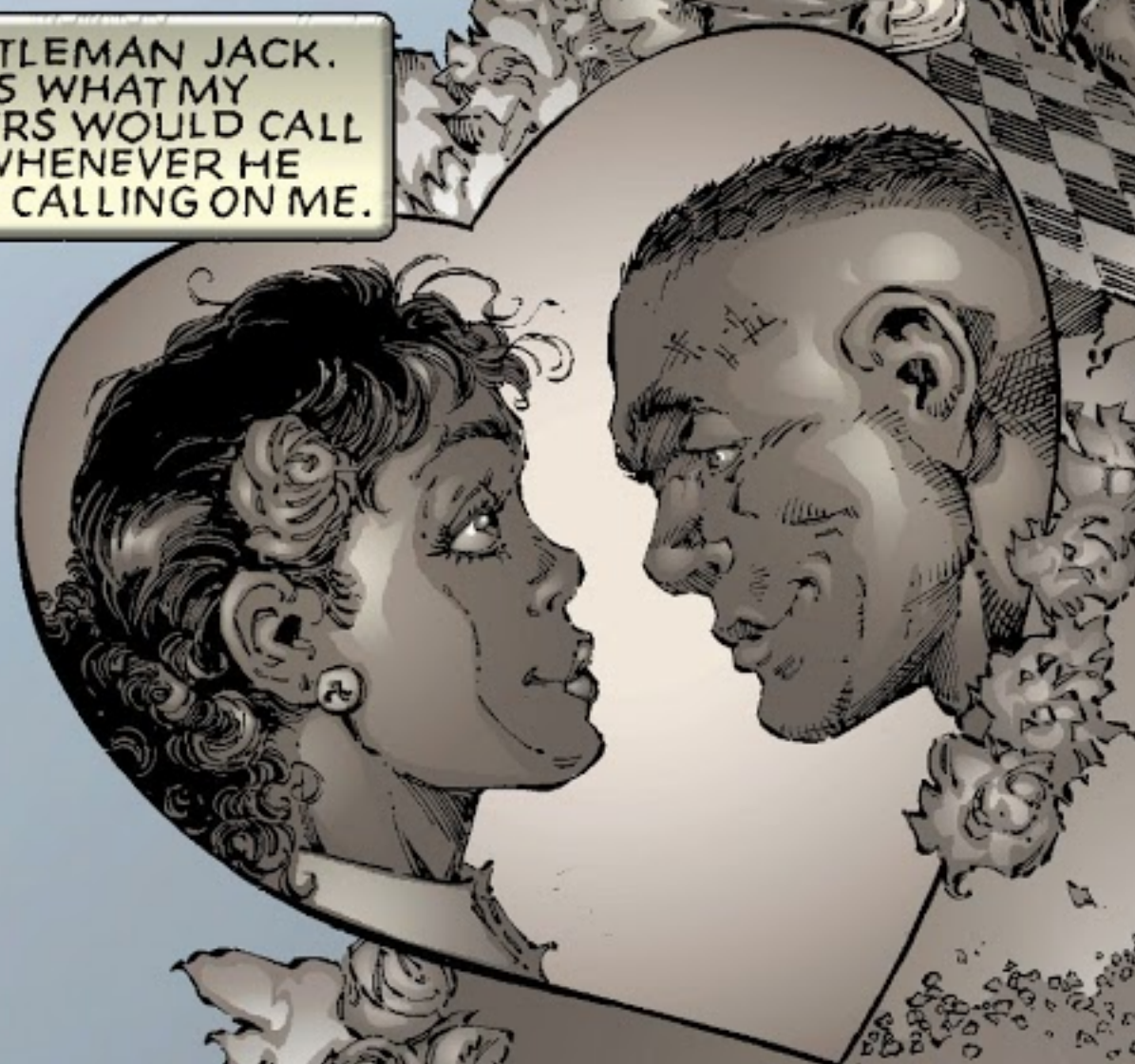
"FOR THE FIRST MONTH HE JUST CALLED ME 'MA'AM'. 'JUST A CUP OF COFFEE, MA'AM.' 'THANK YOU KINDLY, MA'AM.'"

"'YOU HAVE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL EYES, MA'AM.'"

"GENTLEMAN JACK. THAT'S WHAT MY SISTERS WOULD CALL HIM WHENEVER HE CAME CALLING ON ME."

"NOW, IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG TO REALIZE WE WERE HEAD OVER HEELS FOR EACH OTHER. I WAS JUST A GIRL, BUT I **KNEW**. I KNEW THIS WAS THE **REAL THING**."

"BUT THINGS WEREN'T THAT SIMPLE. AS MUCH AS I WANTED TO SPEND MY LIFE WITH THIS MAN, I ALWAYS KNEW HE WAS GOING TO **LEAVE ME**."



"SEE, LIKE MOST YOUNG MEN IN THOSE DAYS, JACK WAS IN THE SERVICE. A GENUINE **TUSKEGEE AIRMAN**, TRAINING AT THE BASE JUST OUTSIDE OF TOWN.

"I REMEMBER THE DAY HE FINALLY GOT HIS **WINGS**. IT WAS THE PROUDEST MOMENT OF HIS LIFE.

"THERE HE WAS. MY OWN KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR, READY TO SLAY ALL THE DRAGONS OF THE WORLD.

"IT MEANT EVERYTHING TO HIM. THE HONOR, THE DISCIPLINE, THE SENSE OF BEING PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER THAN YOURSELF.

"BUT AT THE SAME TIME, MY HEART WAS BREAKING. I'M ASHAMED TO ADMIT IT, BUT PART OF ME WANTED HIM TO **FAIL**, SO HE WOULD HAVE TO STAY BEHIND.

"I JUST WANTED TO HOLD HIM FOREVER.

"THE NIGHT BEFORE HIS SQUADRON LEFT,
THERE WAS A BIG DANCE.

"I WAS PROUD AND NERVOUS AND
TERRIFIED ALL AT ONCE. I COULDN'T
BEAR THE THOUGHT OF LETTING HIM GO.



"THAT NIGHT WE DANCED
SO CLOSE IT FELT LIKE WE
WERE ONE PERSON.

"AND THEN I STARTED TO
CRY. I TOLD HIM I WAS A
FOOL TO FALL FOR HIM,
KNOWING HE WAS GOING
TO BE TAKEN FROM ME.

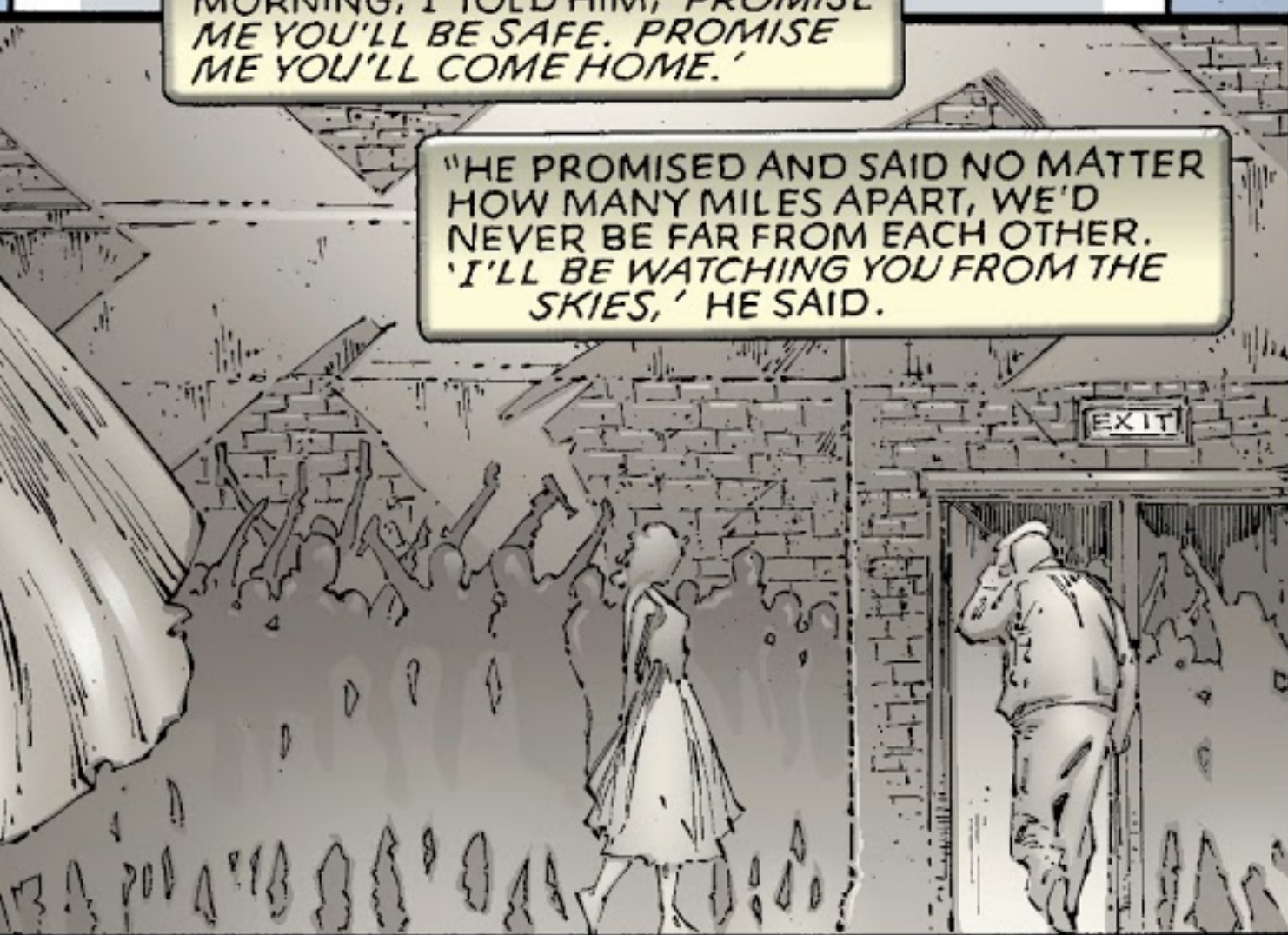
"HE SAID THERE WAS NO WAY HE
COULD DIE. HE HAD TO COME
BACK TO **MARRY ME**.

"HE JUST
BRUSHED MY
HAIR OFF MY
FACE AND
KISSED MY
TEARS AND
TOLD ME
THAT I HAD
NOTHING
TO WORRY
ABOUT.

"WE ANNOUNCED
OUR ENGAGEMENT
THAT VERY MINUTE.

"WHEN THE BOYS LEFT THE NEXT
MORNING, I TOLD HIM, 'PROMISE
ME YOU'LL BE SAFE. PROMISE
ME YOU'LL COME HOME.'

"HE PROMISED AND SAID NO MATTER
HOW MANY MILES APART, WE'D
NEVER BE FAR FROM EACH OTHER.
'I'LL BE WATCHING YOU FROM THE
SKIES,' HE SAID.





"SO JACK FLEW
OFF TO WAR AND
EVERY NIGHT I
WOULD PRAY THAT
THE GOOD LORD
WOULD BRING HIM
HOME TO ME.

"HE WOULD WRITE
ME WHENEVER HE
HAD THE CHANCE,
AND EVERY LETTER
REMINDS ME WHY
I LOVED HIM SO.

"YOU SEE, WHENEVER WE
WERE TOGETHER I FELT LIKE WE
WERE THE ONLY TWO PEOPLE
ALIVE. BUT JACK NEVER COULD
FORGET THE REST OF THE WORLD.

"HE WANTED TO MAKE A
DIFFERENCE. HE WAS FIGHTING
TO MAKE A BETTER LIFE FOR
EVERYONE, TO MAKE A BETTER
WORLD FOR THE KIDS WE
WOULD SOMEDAY HAVE.



"WELL, MY PRAYERS MUST
HAVE REACHED **SOME-
ONE**, BECAUSE MY JACKIE
CAME HOME TO ME
SAFE AND SOUND.



"I READ EACH
LETTER A
THOUSAND TIMES.
TO THIS DAY, I
STILL HAVE THEM
ALL MEMORIZED.



"AND THE FOLLOWING
SPRING, I MARRIED
MYSELF A **HERO**. IT
WAS THE HAPPIEST
DAY OF MY LIFE.

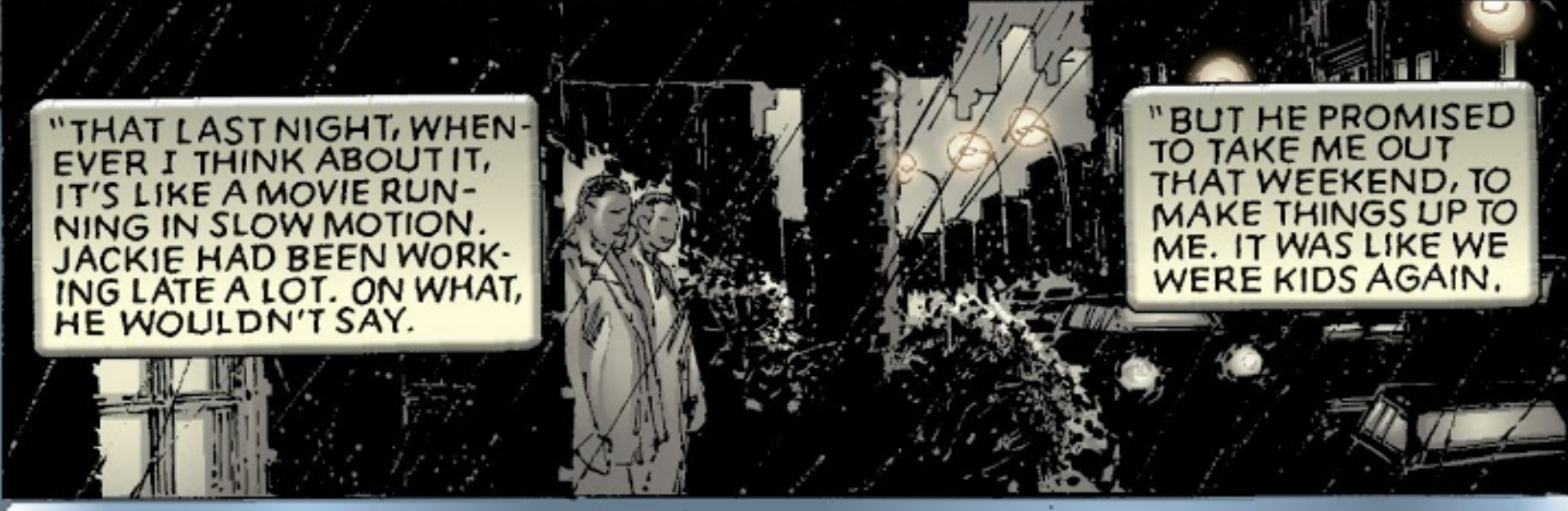
"BUT OUR LIFE
WAS REALLY JUST
BEGINNING.



"JACK WORKED HIS WAY THROUGH LAW SCHOOL, BECAME A LAWYER. WE MOVED UP HERE TO NEW YORK AND STARTED A FAMILY. WHAT MORE COULD WE ASK FOR?"

"OF COURSE, JACK STILL HAD HIS CRUSADES. HE'D TAKE CASES NO ONE ELSE WOULD. TAKE ON ENEMIES THAT'D SCARE OFF ANYONE ELSE."

"THE MOB. THE UNIONS. EVEN THE GOVERNMENT. IT WASN'T IN HIM TO BACK DOWN FROM A FIGHT."



"THAT LAST NIGHT, WHENEVER I THINK ABOUT IT, IT'S LIKE A MOVIE RUNNING IN SLOW MOTION. JACKIE HAD BEEN WORKING LATE A LOT. ON WHAT, HE WOULDN'T SAY."

"BUT HE PROMISED TO TAKE ME OUT THAT WEEKEND, TO MAKE THINGS UP TO ME. IT WAS LIKE WE WERE KIDS AGAIN."

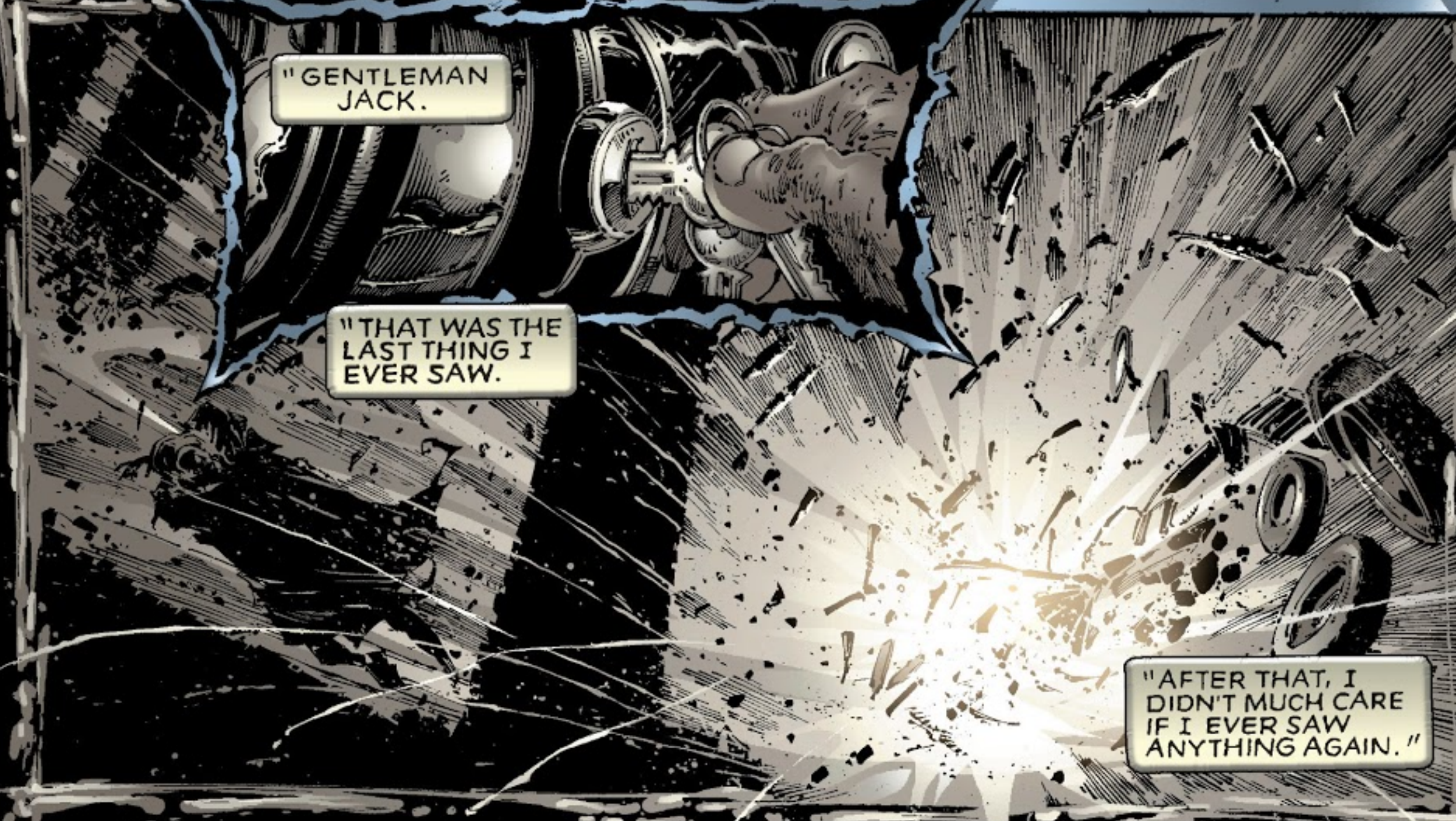


"I'M SORRY. YOU'LL HAVE TO GIVE ME A SECOND..."

"YOU SEE, IT WAS STARTING TO RAIN AND JACKIE TOLD ME TO WAIT WHILE HE RAN AND FETCHED THE CAR."



"IT WAS JUST ACROSS THE STREET, BUT HE INSISTED ANYWAY."



"GENTLEMAN JACK."

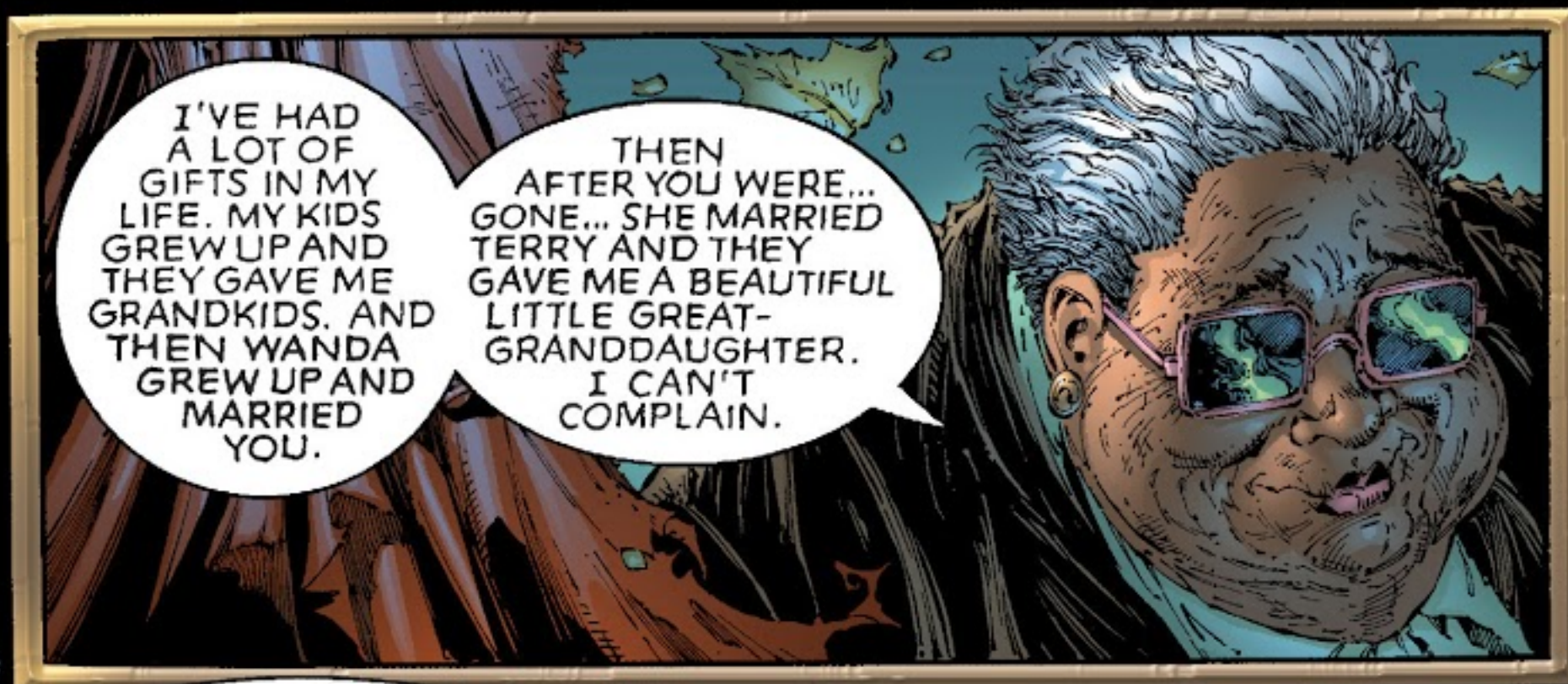
"THAT WAS THE LAST THING I EVER SAW."

"AFTER THAT, I DIDN'T MUCH CARE IF I EVER SAW ANYTHING AGAIN."



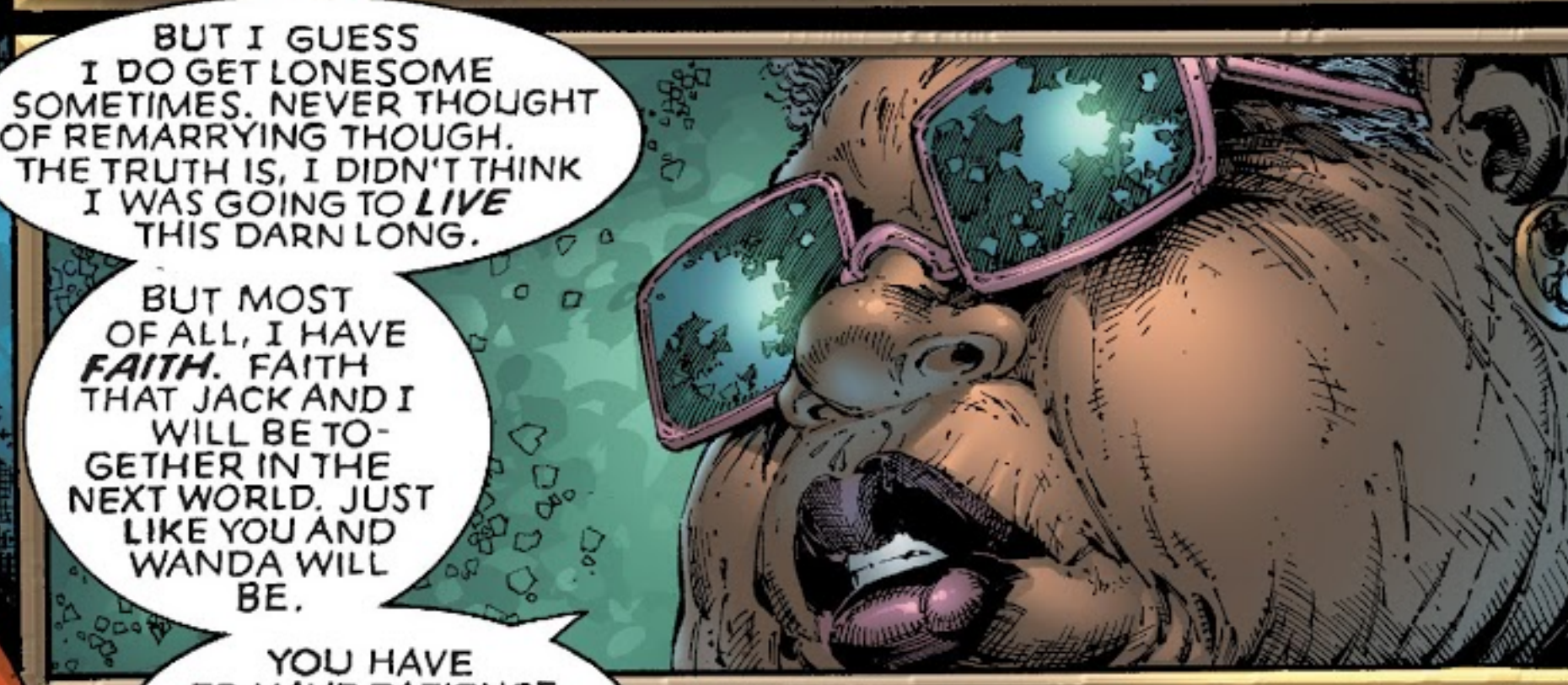
I'M SO
SORRY.
I DIDN'T
KNOW...

"INTO EACH
LIFE A LITTLE
RAIN MUST FALL."
IT'S JUST THAT I NEVER
GOT TO SAY GOODBYE, TO
LOOK HIM IN THE EYE
ONE LAST TIME. BUT
THINGS **DID** GET
BETTER.



I'VE HAD
A LOT OF
GIFTS IN MY
LIFE. MY KIDS
GREW UP AND
THEY GAVE ME
GRANDKIDS. AND
THEN WANDA
GREW UP AND
MARRIED
YOU.

THEN
AFTER YOU WERE...
GONE... SHE MARRIED
TERRY AND THEY
GAVE ME A BEAUTIFUL
LITTLE GREAT-
GRANDDAUGHTER.
I CAN'T
COMPLAIN.



BUT I GUESS
I DO GET LONESOME
SOMETIMES. NEVER THOUGHT
OF REMARRYING THOUGH.
THE TRUTH IS, I DIDN'T THINK
I WAS GOING TO **LIVE**
THIS DARN LONG.

BUT MOST
OF ALL, I HAVE
FAITH. FAITH
THAT JACK AND I
WILL BE TO-
GETHER IN THE
NEXT WORLD. JUST
LIKE YOU AND
WANDA WILL
BE.

YOU HAVE
TO HAVE PATIENCE,
CHILD. SEE, **THIS**
LIFE IS JUST A FLICKER,
A HEARTBEAT. AND
FOREVER'S A REAL
LONG TIME.



"ALL THIS PASSES
SO QUICKLY.
IT'S WHERE
YOU SPEND
ETERNITY
THAT MATTERS."



WHAT WAS IT LIKE, AL? CAN YOU TELL ME? WHEN YOU FIRST PASSED TO THE **OTHER SIDE**, I MEAN. IS IT EVERYTHING YOU THOUGHT IT WOULD BE?

I MEAN, A **WAR** HERO LIKE YOU, I BET THEY ROLLED OUT THE RED CARPET.

I...

IT...

LET'S JUST SAY IT **WASN'T** WHAT I EXPECTED. I REALLY CAN'T TELL YOU ANYTHING MORE. I'M SORRY.

YOU OKAY, AL?

GRANNY BLAKE, I WANT YOU TO COME WITH ME. I'VE JUST HAD AN IDEA.



PLEASE
GIVE ME
YOUR
HAND.



WHAT'S
HAPPENING...
I FEEL
STRANGE.

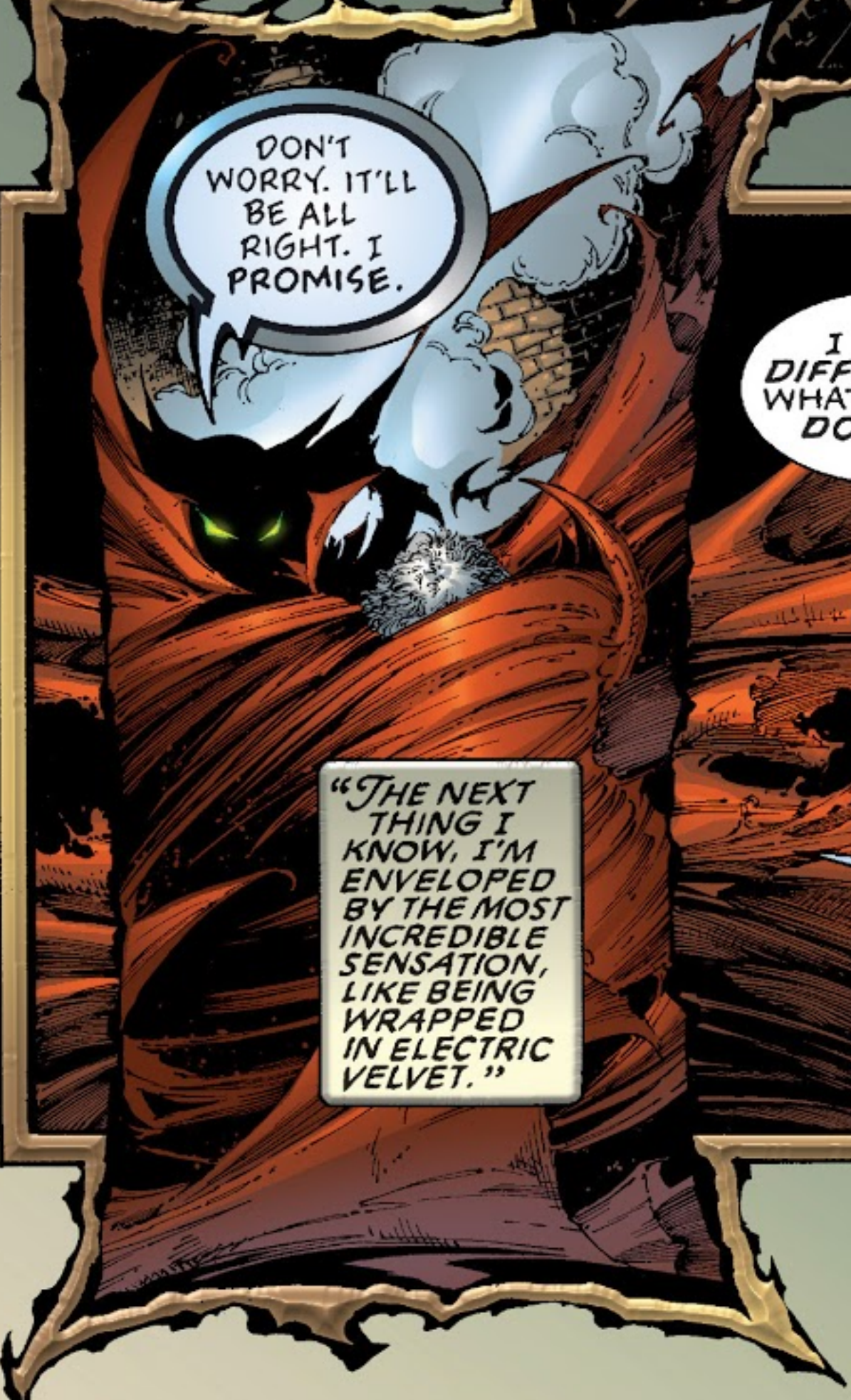
TRUST
ME.



WHERE
ARE WE? WE'RE
SOMEWHERE
ELSE NOW,
AREN'T WE?

IT'S A
SPECIAL
PLACE. A KIND
OF HEAVENLY
CROSSROADS.
IT'S CALLED
THE DEAD
ZONE.

I DON'T
MUCH
LIKE THE
SOUND OF
THAT.



DON'T
WORRY. IT'LL
BE ALL
RIGHT. I
PROMISE.



I FEEL
DIFFERENT...
WHAT DID YOU
DO TO ME?

"THE NEXT
THING I
KNOW, I'M
ENVELOPED
BY THE MOST
INCREDIBLE
SENSATION,
LIKE BEING
WRAPPED
IN ELECTRIC
VELVET."

WALK
FORWARD...
TOWARD THE
LIGHT. I'M SORRY,
I CAN'T GO WITH
YOU. BUT I'LL
BE RIGHT
HERE.

TOWARDS
THE *LIGHT*?
BUT I'M--

Oh my
God!

"IT MAY SOUND
SILLY, BUT IT
WAS SEVERAL
STEPS BEFORE I
REALIZED WHAT
HAPPENED."

I CAN
SEE!

Oh,
GRACIOUS!
LOOK AT ME!
HONEY, HOW
DID YOU DO
THIS?





Shhh.
JUST KEEP
HEADING
FORWARD.

OKAY.

"EVERYTHING
AROUND ME
WAS BUZZING
WITH ENERGY.
LIKE CHAIN
LIGHTNING ON A
SUMMER NIGHT.

Oh,
AL. IT'S
WONDER-
FUL.

"WITH EACH
STEP, THE
FEELING GOT
STRONGER. A
WARM, SWEET
GLOW, LIKE
FLOATING
IN HONEY.

"I KEPT THINKING
IT WAS ALL
SOME BEAUTIFUL
DREAM AND THAT I
WAS GOING TO WAKE
UP ANY SECOND.

"AND THEN IT
HAPPENED.
THE MIRACLE."



Oh
MY
GOD...

IT
CAN'T
BE...

Oh, SWEET
HEAVEN,
IT
IS!

THERE'S
MY
GIRL!

JACK!

YOU KNOW,
YOU HAVE
THE MOST
BEAUTIFUL
EYES,
MA'AM!

Oh,
JACK,
IS IT
REALLY
YOU?



"AFTER ALL THESE
YEARS, TO HOLD HIM
AGAIN. TO LOOK IN HIS
EYES ONCE MORE AND
HEAR HIM SAY, 'I LOVE
YOU, MARY BLAKE.'"

"AND WE DANCED SO
CLOSE IT FELT LIKE WE
WERE ONE PERSON. I
WANTED TO NEVER
LET HIM GO."

"HE TOLD ME HOW
MUCH HE MISSED
ME, HOW MUCH I
STILL MEANT TO HIM.
AND THAT HE'LL WAIT
FOR ME. THAT WE
HAVE AN ETERNITY TO
SPEND TOGETHER."



"I DON'T
KNOW
HOW MUCH
TIME
PASSED...
A MINUTE...
AN HOUR...
A YEAR..."



I HAVE
TO GO.



LIVE YOUR
LIFE, MARY. MAKE
THE MOST OF THE
TIME YOU HAVE.
I'LL BE WAITING
FOR YOU.

NO MATTER
WHAT, WE'LL
NEVER BE FAR
APART. I'LL BE
WATCHING YOU
FROM THE **SKIES**.
I LOVE YOU,
MARY.



I
ALWAYS
HAVE AND
I ALWAYS
WILL.



I LOVE
YOU TOO,
JACK.

I
LOVE
YOU,
TOO.



OH, AL! IT
WAS WONDERFUL.
HOW DID YOU DO
IT? AN HONEST
TO GOODNESS
MIRACLE! HOW
CAN I EVER THANK
YOU?

WAIT! STOP!
DON'T CROSS THE
THRESHOLD.



I JUST
WANTED TO DO
SOMETHING FOR
YOU. I... OH MY
GOD! I DIDN'T
REALIZE...
YOU...

YOU LOOK
JUST LIKE
WANDA!



COME
HERE, AL.
I WANT TO
SEE WHAT MY
**GUARDIAN
ANGEL**
LOOKS
LIKE.

NO, I
CAN'T.

HUSH. I
MAY LOOK
21, BUT I'M
STILL YOUR
ELDER. NOW
DO AS I
SAY.



COME ON.
CLOSER. OK,
AL, YOU'RE
BEAUTIFUL!



THANK
YOU,
AL.

"AS I KISSED HIM, I
TOOK ONE STEP OUT
OF THE DOORWAY.
AND THEN EVERYTHING
WENT DARK AGAIN."

THANK
YOU.

YOU
JUST MADE
AN OLD
WOMAN
VERY
HAPPY.

I'M
GLAD.

DO YOU
SEE WHAT
I MEAN NOW?
IT'S THE
FOREVER
THAT
COUNTS.

THE WORLD
IS FULL OF MEN
WHO WILL
MARCH INTO **HELL**
FOR A PRETTY GIRL,
BUT IT'S THE GOOD
ONES WHO WILL
OPEN THE GATES
OF **HEAVEN**
FOR HER.

TERRY'S A
FINE MAN. HE'LL
TAKE GOOD CARE
OF WANDA. BUT
HE'S NOT HER
SOUL MATE.
NOT LIKE YOU.

I FIGURE
GOD MUST HAVE
SOMETHING BIG
PLANNED FOR YOU
IF HE BROUGHT YOU
BACK, BUT YOU
KEEP MISSING IT
BECAUSE YOU
CAN'T SEE PAST
WANDA.

YOU HAVE TO
LET HER GO. FOR
A WHILE ANYWAY.
LET HER LIVE HER LIFE.
YOU'VE GOT BIG THINGS
IN STORE FOR YOU, AL
SIMMONS. THAT MUCH
I'M SURE OF.

AND YOU'LL
HAVE AN **ETERNITY**
TO SPEND WITH
WANDA. JUST HAVE
A LITTLE **FAITH**...

BUT
THAT'S
JUST
IT...

Shhh. I
KNOW IT'S
HARD. TRUE LOVE
ALWAYS IS. IF IT
WASN'T, **EVERY-
ONE** WOULD
DO IT.



"YOU KNOW,
LOVE IS A
FUNNY THING."



WHO'S MY
LITTLE ANGEL?
Huh?

CYAN.

WHO?

CYAN!
CYAN!
CYAN!



"I'LL SWEEP
YOU OFF
YOUR FEET
AND SPIN YOU
ALL AROUND."

THAT'S
RIGHT
SWEETIE.
YES YOU
ARE!

WHEEE!



LOOK
MOMMY. WE'RE
FLYING!

WHAT?!



"BUT SOONER OR
LATER, SOME-
THING HAPPENS
TO BRING YOU
DOWN TO EARTH."

OOF!
HOW--?



IT'S HIM,
MOMMY!
I THINK HE'S
HERE.



HUR-REE,
MOMMY.

WHO,
HONEY?
WHO'S
HERE?

"AND THAT'S WHEN THE
WORK STARTS.
'CAUSE WHAT'S WORTH
HAVING IS WORTH
FIGHTING FOR. WORTH
SACRIFICING FOR. THAT'S
WHAT REAL LOVE IS."

"GENTLEMAN"
JACK BLAKE
TAUGHT ME THAT.

"SO WHAT
HAPPENS
NEXT?"

I DON'T
SEE
ANYONE.

"IF YOU
ASK ME,
AL WILL
FIND A WAY
TO SAY
GOODBYE TO
HIS WANDA,
AT LEAST
FOR NOW.

Hmm?

"BUT HE'LL
ALWAYS BE
WATCHING OUT
FOR, HER, JUST
LIKE MY JACKIE.

Ooh...
PRIDDY. IT
WAS THE
SAD MAN.
I KNOW
IT!

LOOK
MOMMY.

"AND THEN HE'LL GO OFF
AND FIND OUT WHAT
LIES AHEAD FOR HIM.
FIND THE ANSWERS HE'S
BEEN LOOKING FOR.

NO
MATTER
WHAT IT
TAKES...

"AND THEN, WHEN HE
FINALLY FINDS HIS TRUE
PATH, NO MATTER HOW
LONG AND HARD THE
JOURNEY, IN THE END IT
WILL LEAD HIM BACK
TO HER.

"AND THEY'LL BE TOGETHER
AGAIN. IF NOT IN THIS
WORLD, THEN IN THE NEXT.

"I MAY NOT KNOW
A LOT OF THINGS,
BUT I DO KNOW THAT."





77

DIGITAL
EDITION

SPAWN





I WANT
THE
TRUTH.

I WANT TO
KNOW WHAT'S
HAPPENING
TO ME.



AND WHAT **IS** HAPPENING TO YOU, SPAWN?



EVER SINCE I WAS ATTACKED BY THAT THING, BY THAT HEAP... EVER SINCE MY MEETING WITH THE GREEN-WORLD*...

I CAN SEE THINGS, FEEL THINGS...

* IN SPAWN #73-75.



WHENEVER I CLOSE MY EYES, IT'S LIKE ALL THE DARKNESS AND PAIN AND SUFFERING IN THE WORLD AROUND ME COMES FLOODING INTO MY MIND.

THEY TOLD ME THINGS... THE KEEPER... HE SPOKE OF PROPHECIES, ABOUT ENDING THE WAR BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL...

AND
BOOTSY...
HE WAS REALLY
AN ANGEL AND
HE SAVED ME.
WHY? AND HE SAID
SOMETHING
ABOUT A CHILD...
WHAT DOES IT
MEAN? *

NONE OF
IT MAKES
SENSE.

BUT THE
PAIN... IT'S
SO REAL.
IT'S ALIVE,
LIKE IT'S
HAPPENING
TO ME...

THE
SCALES
HAVE DROPPED
FROM YOUR
EYES, HELL-
SPAWN.

YOU WANT
TO KNOW WHAT
HAS "HAPPENED"
TO YOU, BUT
YOU'VE NEVER
BOTHERED TO
LEARN WHAT IT
IS YOU TRULY
ARE.

* SPAWN 75.

YOU WANT
ANSWERS,
BUT YOU STILL
HAVEN'T
LEARNED TO
ASK THE RIGHT
QUESTIONS.

ENOUGH!



DO YOU UNDERSTAND ME?
I WANT THE TRUTH!
I DON'T CARE HOW MUCH IT HURTS,
I WANT THE TRUTH!

CLANG

CLANK

THUNK

DAMN YOU, COG!
I'M TIRED OF THIS GAME!

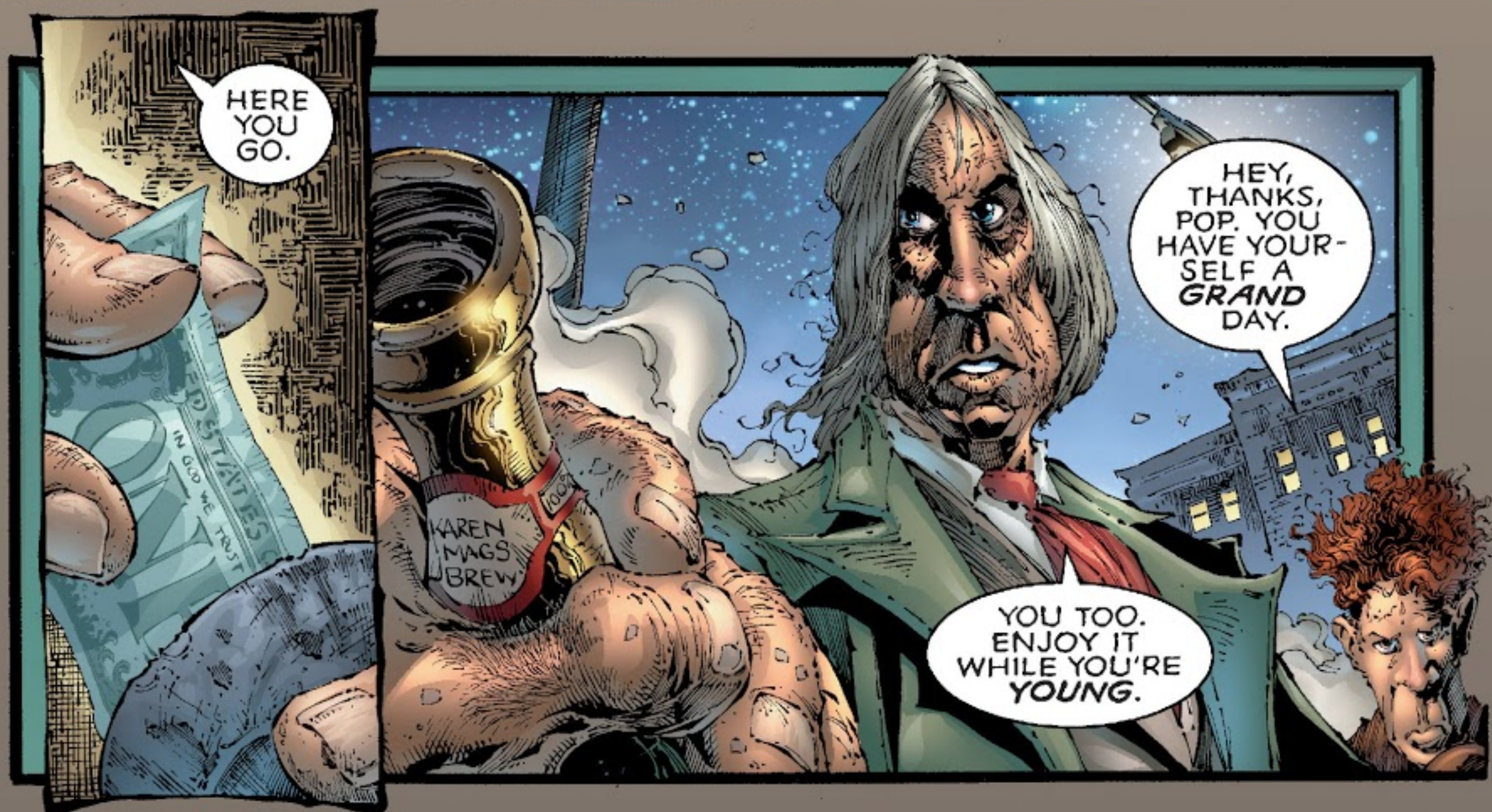
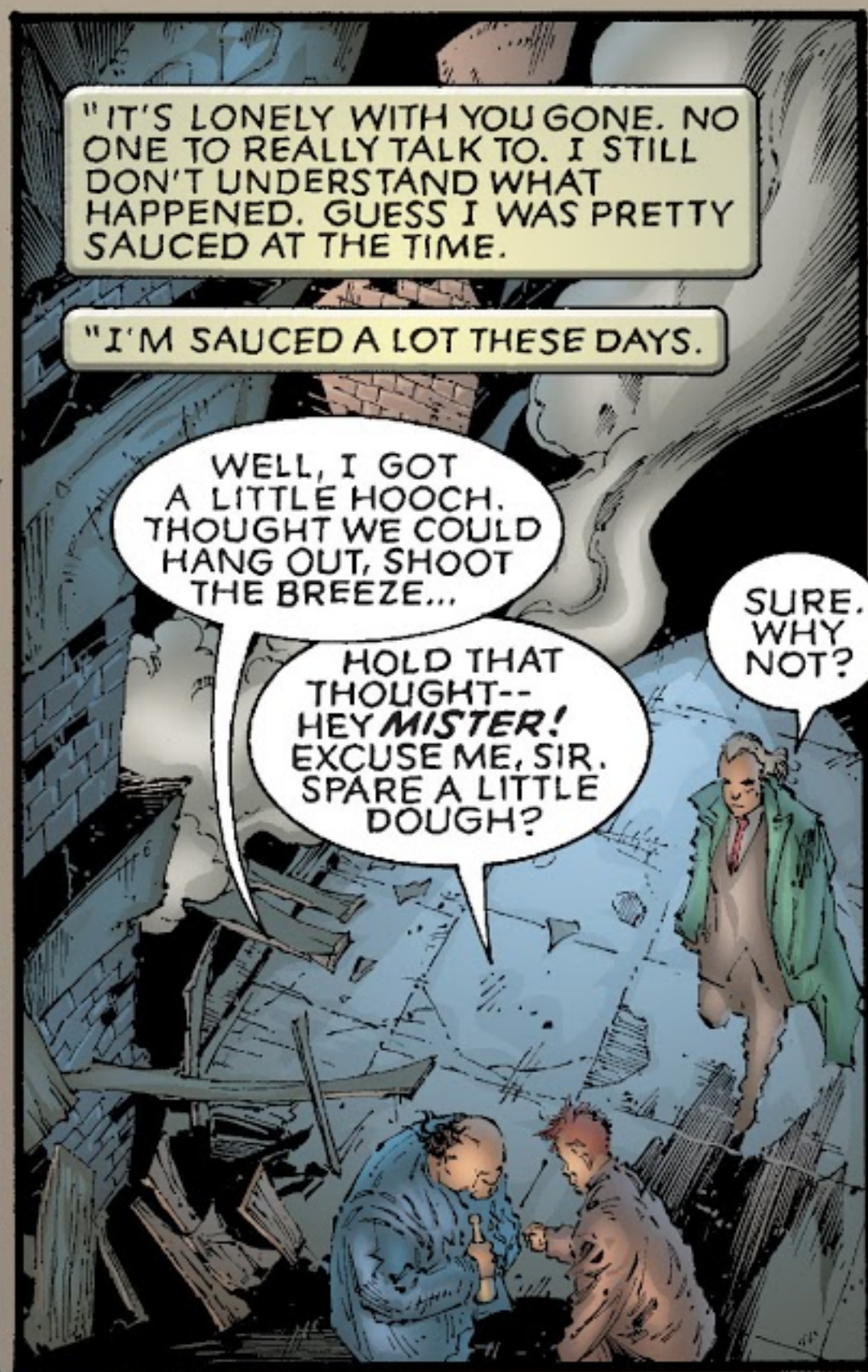
UFF!

I DON'T WANT RIDDLES, I DON'T WANT EVASIONS, I WANT ANSWERS! NOW!
AND IF YOU CAN'T GIVE THEM TO ME,
THEN LEAVE ME THE HELL ALONE!

Hmmm...

VERY WELL. PERHAPS YOU ARE READY.







"I DON'T KNOW, BOOTSY. MAYBE YOU WERE A **REAL** ANGEL AFTER ALL. MAKES AS MUCH SENSE AS ANYTHING ELSE.

"THING IS, IF YOU ARE **UP THERE**, I THOUGHT MAYBE YOU COULD HELP ME OUT A LITTLE.

LISTEN MAN, NO OFFENSE BUT I LIKE TO KEEP TO MYSELF. I AIN'T LOOKING FOR NO **FAITHFUL SIDE-KICK**, OKAY?

YEAH.

"MAYBE YOU CAN SEND ME A **SIGN** OR SOMETHING.



GOOD EVENING, MA'AM. COULD YOU SPARE SOME CHANGE?

REAL CHANGE COMES FROM WITHIN, FRIEND.



MY NAME IS SARAH. I CAN HELP YOU... IF YOU'RE WILLING TO HELP YOURSELF.

OK, JEEZ. HERE IT COMES. NO THANKS, LADY. I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF.



HOW ABOUT YOU, SIR? YOU LOOK LIKE YOU COULD USE A **FRIEND**.



YEAH. THANKS. I THINK MAYBE I COULD...

SHORTLY.

A CHURCH?

THERE IT IS. UP AHEAD.

ONCE NOW IT IS A MUSEUM. OWNED BY A **PRIVATE TRUST**. ART, ANTIQUES, NATURAL HISTORY. BUT WE NEED ONLY CONCERN OURSELVES WITH **ONE COLLECTION**.

BUT WHY ARE WE HERE?

FOR ANSWERS.

I CONFESS I DON'T QUITE UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU IN THE "GREENWORLD." BUT IT SEEMS YOU HAVE TAPPED INTO SOME DEEPER AWARENESS.

YOU ARE, FOR ALL YOUR INTENTIONS, A CREATURE OF EVIL, A LIVING REPOSITORY OF **SIN**.

IT WOULD MAKE SENSE THAT YOU SHOULD RESONATE TO THE WICKEDNESS THAT TRANSPIRES AROUND YOU.

HOW DID YOU JUST OPEN THAT DOOR WITHOUT A KEY?

THIS OLD DOG STILL HAS A FEW TRICKS LEFT IN HIM...

"... BESIDES, YOU DON'T IMAGINE I SPEND **ALL** MY TIME IN THE ALLEYS, DO YOU?"

STATION 2 CHECKING IN. EVERYTHING'S CLEAR.

NOW, LET ME ASK YOU SOMETHING. YOU PERFORMED A VIRTUAL **MIRACLE** FOR MARY BLAKE. * DO YOU HAVE **ANY IDEA** HOW YOU DID THAT?

I DON'T KNOW... I JUST WANTED TO HELP HER. EASE HER PAIN.

YOU'RE TAPPING INTO YOUR POWERS INTUITIVELY, WHICH IS GOOD. BUT YOU NEED TO **STUDY** THEM AS WELL.

UNDERSTANDING IS AS IMPORTANT AS INSTINCT.



JUST A
LITTLE
FURTHER.

HERE.

TO
PREPARE
FOR YOUR
FUTURE,
SPAWN...

... YOU
MUST FIRST
LEARN YOUR
PAST.

LATER, THE
OFFICES OF
SAM BURKE
AND TWITCH
WILLIAMS,
PRIVATE
INVESTIGATORS.

TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT,
TWITCH. I CAN FEEL IT.
WE'RE GONNA BRING THAT
CRIMSON FREAK IN.

SIR, I THINK
YOU SHOULD
CALM DOWN.

I'LL CALM
DOWN WHEN
SPAWN IS BEHIND BARS.
Oh MAN, I JUST **HOPE**
THAT SUCKER TRIES
TO **RESIST**.

YOU'RE
A BETTER
DETECTIVE
THAN THIS, SIR.
YOU KNOW IT'S
UNWISE TO GO
INTO A SITUATION
LIKE THIS WHEN
EMOTIONS
ARE HIGH.

CAN IT,
TWITCH.
THIS
SIMMONS
BASTARD
COST US OUR
BADGES.
HE'S A
MENACE.

I SAY IT'S
TIME FOR SOME
MAJOR
PAYBACK.

IS THAT
WHAT YOU SAY?
I WAS UNDER
THE IMPRESSION
WE WERE
PARTNERS.

YEAH,
WELL,
PARTNER...
I'M
LEAVING.
YOU WANT
TO LECTURE
ME, DO IT
IN THE
CAR.



I WANT
YOU TO
UNDERSTAND
SOMETHING, SIR.
I AM ONLY HERE
TO WATCH YOUR
BACK. I DO NOT
CONDONE THIS
EXCURSION.

FINE.
SO
NOTED.





"WELL, I ASKED AROUND ABOUT THAT LADY. SOME OF THE OTHER GUYS GOT CARDS FROM HER TOO. SAID SHE SEEMED PRETTY NICE."

"THOUGHT I MIGHT TAKE A CHANCE AND CHECK IT OUT. MAYBE GET A LITTLE HELP. BUT I'M TOO LATE. THE PLACE IS LOCKED UP FOR THE NIGHT."

"SHOULDN'T HAVE GOT MY HOPES UP."

"I MEAN, I HAVE NO ILLUSIONS. I KNOW WHAT I AM. I'M A BUM. A LOSER. JUST SOME USELESS OLD RELIC TOSSED OUT BY THE ROADSIDE."



"AND THAT WAS OKAY WITH ME. I KNEW WHERE I STOOD."

"I ALWAYS FIGURED THAT WHEN YOU GOT NOTHING, YOU GOT NOTHING TO LOSE."



"BUT I WAS WRONG. THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING MORE TO LOSE."

" I GUESS IT'S
BACK TO THE
SCRAP HEAP
WITH THE REST
OF THE REJECTS.

HEY!

YOU
THERE!
MAGGOT! I
KNOW YOU. YOU'RE
BUDDY-BUDDY
WITH **SPAWN**,
AIN'T'CHA?
WHERE'S
HE AT?

Huh?

LISTEN
TO ME,
LOW-LIFE.

WE GOT THE
GOODS ON **SPAWN**.
WE'RE GONNA
DRAG THE **BIG RED
FRUIT** DOWN TO THE
NEAREST PRECINCT
HOUSE AND FILL
OUT HIS **DANCE
CARD**.

YOU DO **NOT**
WANT TO IMPEDE
OUR INVESTIGATION.

EASY,
SIR.

I DON'T
KNOW, I
SWEAR.

BUT, MAYBE
YOU COULD HELP
ME. MY FRIEND **BOOTSY**,
HE'S **GONE**. I THINK
MAYBE HE WAS
ABDUCTED...

I
DON'T
KNOW.

I-I-I AIN'T
SEEN HIM.

HONEST.

I DON'T
KNOW... BUT
SOMETHING
BAD
HAPPENED...

WE'RE NOT LAW
ENFORCEMENT, **BOBBY**.
IF YOU'RE REALLY CON-
CERNED ABOUT YOUR
FRIEND, YOU SHOULD
CONTACT THE POLICE.
I'M SORRY.

YOU
COMIN',
TWITCH?



I HAD
NO
IDEA...

WHAT
IS THIS
PLACE?

THE
ARCHIVES
OF THE
HELLSPAWN.
THE WORK OF
A HUNDRED
LIFETIMES.

TOMES,
RELIQUARIES,
ARTIFACTS AND
APOCRYPHA,
ALL RELATING
TO THE UNHOLY
CURSE THAT
PLAGUES
YOU.

EACH
A SMALL
PIECE IN A
PUZZLE
WHICH
REMAINS
UNSOLVED.

WAIT.
THERE'S
SOME-
THING
WRONG...

KRAK!

DAMMIT!
SPAWN! GET
DOWN!





NO!
DON'T
EXPEND
YOUR
STRENGTH.
IT'S TRYING
TO LEECH
YOUR POWER.
JUST HOLD
STILL FOR A
SECOND...

WHAT
THE HELL
IS
THIS?

WHAT?!



IT'S THE
CEREMONIAL
HEADDRESS
OF A
SERAPHIC
WARRIOR.

IT BELONGED
TO ONE OF THE
ALL-TIME GREAT
HELLSPAWN
HUNTERS, A
PARTICULARLY
LETHAL ANGEL
NAMED
IMMACULATA.

CRASH!

I SLEW HER
MYSELF,
CENTURIES AGO.
GUESS IT STILL
HAD A LITTLE
KICK LEFT IN IT.

SORRY...
AT LEAST
THIS TIME YOU
REMEMBERED
NOT TO TOUCH
THE LANCE.



YOU
SLEW AN
ANGEL?

MORE
THAN ONE.
I WAS
QUITE THE
WARRIOR IN
MY DAY...



ALTHOUGH
"VICIOUS INHUMAN
MONSTER" MIGHT
BE A MORE APT
DESCRIPTION. THERE
ARE MANY CRIMES
I MUST CLAIM
AS MY OWN.

I HAVE
OCEANS
OF **BLOOD**
ON MY
HANDS.



I BROUGHT
YOU HERE
BECAUSE I
WANT YOU TO
UNDERSTAND
THE **DEPTH** AND
BREADTH OF
THIS CURSE,
AND HOW
MANY IT HAD
TOUCHED.

INCLUDING
MYSELF.

I UNDER-
STAND YOUR
SITUATION
BETTER THAN
YOU THINK. YOU
SEE, I TOO AM
A **HELL-
SPAWN**.

PERHAPS
THE **WORST**
THAT EVER
WALKED THE
EARTH. AFTER
CENTURIES OF BLOOD-
THIRSTY MAYHEM, I
REBELLED. I TRIED
TO BREAK THE
HOLD THE DEVIL
HAD ON ME.

I FOUND A
WAY TO EXTRICATE
MYSELF FROM MY
**SYMBIOTIC
NECROFORM**,
TO REGAIN MY
FREEDOM.

IT WAS
LENGTHY,
ARDUOUS
AND
EXTREMELY
PAINFUL...

... AND IT **FAILED.**

I PURGED THE SYMBIOTE FROM MY FLESH, BUT RATHER THAN FREEDOM, I FOUND MYSELF TRAPPED BETWEEN TWO WORLDS.

HELL CANNOT LAY CLAIM TO ME, BUT NEITHER WILL **HEAVEN.**

I AM DAMNED TO WALK THIS WORLD FOREVER, UNLESS I CAN FIND A CHAMPION WHO WILL FINALLY BREAK THIS CRUEL CHAIN THAT BINDS US.

I BELIEVE YOU MAY BE THE **ONE**, AL SIMMONS. THE ONE TO FINALLY END THIS MINDLESS, MERCILESS WAR.

A WAR THAT NEITHER SIDE HAS ANY INTEREST IN ENDING. BUT IT WON'T BE EASY. AND THE COST MOST CERTAINLY WILL BE HIGH.

... AND IT **FAILED.**

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A WAR THAT NEITHER SIDE HAS ANY INTEREST IN ENDING. BUT IT WON'T BE EASY. AND THE COST MOST CERTAINLY WILL BE HIGH.

... AND IT **FAILED.**

I PURGED THE SYMBIOTE FROM MY FLESH, BUT RATHER THAN FREEDOM, I FOUND MYSELF TRAPPED BETWEEN TWO WORLDS.

HELL CANNOT LAY CLAIM TO ME, BUT NEITHER WILL **HEAVEN.**

I AM DAMNED TO WALK THIS WORLD FOREVER, UNLESS I CAN FIND A CHAMPION WHO WILL FINALLY BREAK THIS CRUEL CHAIN THAT BINDS US.

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'SUP,
BOBBY?

HEY,
GUYS. GOT
ANYTHING
TO DRINK?
ANYTHING
AT ALL?

SORRY.
BUT YOU
MIGHT
WANT TO
LAY OFF A
LITTLE. YOU
AIN'T
LOOKIN' SO
GOOD.

"I AIN'T *FEELIN'*
SO GOOD. MY
HEAD FEELS LIKE
A SACK OF WET
CEMENT.

"CAN'T GET MY
HANDS TO
STOP SHAKING.

HEY,
BERNIE,
CAN YOU
SPARE A
DROP
OF ANY-
THING?

PISS
OFF! I'M
SLEEPING!

"I'M DRY AS A
BONE. ALL I NEED
IS A LITTLE SOME-
THING TO TAKE
THE EDGE OFF.

WHISTLER...
HEY, THAT
YOU?

SLEEPING
IT OFF, huh?
LISTEN, I
DON'T MEAN
TO BUG YOU
BUT--

"JUST A COUPLE
DROPS TO WET
MY THROAT.

HOLY
CHRIST!
Oh MY GOD!
WHISTLER!



NO!
NO!

No!

IT
CAN'T
BE!



HAAUCH!

"THIS CAN'T BE
HAPPENING.
NOT AGAIN.
BOOTSY, YOU
ALWAYS TOLD
ME IF I HAD
FAITH, EVERY-
THING WOULD
BE OKAY.

"WELL, IT'S NOT
WORKING. THE
TIDE IS RISING
AND I'M SINKING
FAST.



"AND JUST WHEN I
THINK I HIT **BOTTOM**...

"GOD HELP ME, I
FIND SOME PLACE
LOWER TO GO.

HEAVEN
FORGIVE
ME.





... AND SO
I HAVE SPENT
CENTURIES WATCHING
THE HELLSPAWN RISE
AND FALL, SEARCHING
FOR SOME WAY TO
BREAK THIS DEMONIC
CURSE.

IN EACH
CASE I HAVE
MET WITH
FAILURE.
LOOK AROUND
YOU.



THE REMNANTS
OF COUNTLESS
WARRIORS, SOME
NOBLE, SOME WICKED,
MANY OF THEM
FOOLISH. ALL OF
WHOM HAVE FALLEN
TO THIS CURSE.

ALL
THESE...
CAME
BEFORE
ME?

YES. **THAT**
ONE IS OF
COUNT NOVIA
OF ILLYRIA. A MOST
SHREWD AND
GIFTED STUDENT. HE
SERVED AS COURT
WIZARD FOR TWO
EMPERORS AND
A CZAR.

A FEARLESS
WARRIOR WITH
A KEEN MIND AND
AN UNPARALLELED
INSTINCT FOR
SURVIVAL. BUT NOW
HE KNEELS AT THE
THRONE OF
MALEBOLGIA,
JUST LIKE THE
REST.



SO WHAT
CHANCE DO
I HAVE? WHAT
CAN I DO?



WHAT ARE YOU **WILLING** TO DO? I'M AFRAID AFTER ALL THIS TIME, I HAVE FOUND ONLY ONE CERTAIN WAY TO ESCAPE THE CURSE. I DOUBT VERY MUCH YOU'LL LIKE IT.

SPAWN, YOU CAN **ACCEPT** YOUR DEMONIC NATURE, **NURTURE** IT, ALLOW IT TO GROW IN STRENGTH AND POWER...

UNTIL SUCH A TIME AS YOU ARE **STRONG AND POWERFUL** ENOUGH TO CONFRONT THE MALEBOLGIA AND **DEFEAT** HIM...

... AND **TAKE HIS PLACE** AS THE **KING OF HELL.**

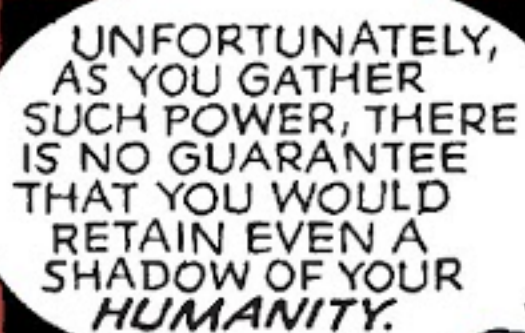
WHAT?!

ARE YOU TELLING ME THE ONLY WAY TO STOP BEING A HELLSPAWN IS TO BE-COME THE **DEVIL?!**

IT WOULD THEN BE IN YOUR PURVIEW TO **END** THE GREAT WAR WITH **HEAVEN** AND TO RELEASE ALL SOULS HELD CAPTIVE IN THE LOWER DEPTHS.

YOU COULD BRING **PEACE** AND **SALVATION** TO THIS WORLD, BUT **YOU** WOULD HAVE TO REMAIN ALONE IN HELL FOR ETERNITY, RULING AS ITS SOVEREIGN.

THE ULTIMATE **SACRIFICE.**



UNFORTUNATELY,
AS YOU GATHER
SUCH POWER, THERE
IS NO GUARANTEE
THAT YOU WOULD
RETAIN EVEN A
SHADOW OF YOUR
HUMANITY.

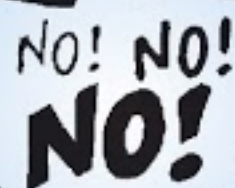
YOU COULD
VERY WELL
BECOME
ECLIPSED BY
EVIL.

NO!
THIS IS
TOO MUCH!
THERE HAS TO
BE ANOTHER
WAY!



THE ONLY RECOURSE
IS TO REDEEM YOURSELF--
TO GAIN *HEAVEN'S* FAVOR--
BUT SO FAR THEY'VE NOT
PROVEN VERY
ACCOMODATING.

STILL, I ADMIT I'M
INTRIGUED BY WHAT
BELAZEKIAL, OR "BOOTSY"
AS HE WAS KNOWN TO YOU,
SAID ABOUT A *CHILD*.
PERHAPS THERE IS--



NO! NO!
NO!

SPAWN,
THERE IS NO
CALL FOR
HISTRIONICS.

SPAWN?!



NO! IT'S
ONE OF THOSE
VISIONS!
SOMETHING
TERRIBLE IS OUT
THERE.

I
DON'T...

SOME
DARK
FORCE...

THERE'S
SOME-
THING
WRONG...

"--SOME-
THING
VERY
WRONG."

>Sigh< WELL,
NO SIGN OF
SPAWNY. I GUESS
TONIGHT WAS
BUST.

I THINK IT'S
FOR THE BEST.
WE'LL BETTER
ADDRESS THIS
MATTER WHEN
COOLER HEADS
PREVAIL.

YEAH.
LISTEN...
SORRY ABOUT
THE THEATRICS.
JUST LOST MY TEMPER.
I WASN'T BEING FAIR.
TRUTH IS, I DON'T
KNOW WHAT I'D DO
WITHOUT YOU,
PARTNER.

MUTUAL,
SIR.

EXCUSE ME.
DO EITHER OF
YOU GENTLE-
MEN HAVE A
LIGHT?

HANG ON,
LET ME
CHECK...

NEVER
MIND...
I
FOUND
ONE.

BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!

JEEZUS!
GET DOWN,
TWITCH!

SONUVABITCH
PSYCHO! I SWEAR,
IF YOU CHIP THE
PAINT ON MY
RIDE...

BLAM!
BLAM!

BAW!

IT'S
OKAY,
TWITCH, I
DROPPED
THE
BASTARD.
WHY THE
HELL WAS
HE--

TWITCH?
HEY,
TWITCH?



TO BE CONTINUED...





78

DIGITAL
EDITION

SPAWN



CLAYTON
78
MIL
DAN

12:01 A.M.

THREE DAYS.

IT'S BEEN
THREE DAYS
MY BEST
FRIEND'S
BEEN
LYING IN A
HOSPITAL
BED.

THREE DAYS
OF LISTENING
TO SOME DAMN
MACHINE
BEEPING AWAY...

beep beep beep beep

... AND THE I-V
DRIPPING LIKE
A GODDAMN
CHINESE WATER
TORTURE.

THREE DAYS OF LOOKING
AT MY PARTNER, TWITCH
WILLIAMS, LAID OUT LIKE A
SIDE OF BEEF WITH A .22
SLUG IN A FRONTAL LOBE
AND KNOWING IT'S ALL
MY FAULT.

LISTENING TO
DOCTORS SAY AN
OPERATION'S TOO
RISKY. SEEING
TWITCH'S POOR
WIFE BAWL HER
EYES OUT AND
NOT HAVING THE
NERVE TO LOOK
HER IN THE FACE.

DAMN IT,
TWITCH...
I'M SO
SORRY.

THREE DAYS
OF WISHING
I WAS DEAD.



I NEVER BEEN THE SPIRITUAL TYPE.

EVEN WHEN I WAS A KID AND THE NUNS WOULD SMACK ME AROUND AND MAKE ME RECITE THE 'ACT OF CONTRITION,' I FIGURED THEY WERE FULL OF CRAP.

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN "PRAGMATIC," AS TWITCH WOULD SAY. I MEASURE MY LIFE IN CIGARETTE BUTTS AND STYROFOAM COFFEE CUPS.



I WONDER WHAT HE'D SAY ABOUT ME NOW, ABOUT THE MESS I GOT US IN. I KNOW WHAT THE NUNS WOULD CALL IT:

"A LONG DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL."

PLEASE...



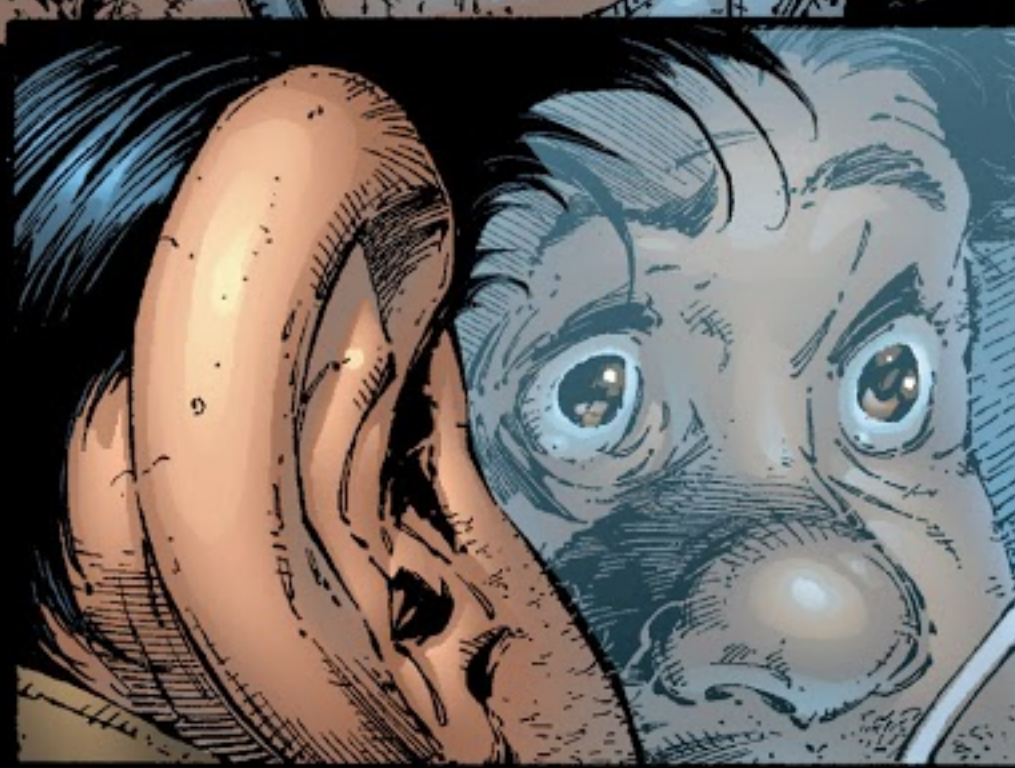
...IF THERE'S **ANYBODY** OUT THERE... ANYONE AT ALL...



...JUST MAKE SURE MY BUDDY'S OKAY. PLEASE?



JUST LET HIM BE ALL RIGHT, AND I SWEAR, I'LL DO **ANYTHING**. I SWEAR TO GOD I WILL...



CROSS MY HEART AND HOPE TO... DIE...



SAM
BURKE... YOU
SHOULD BE
CAREFUL WHAT
YOU WISH
FOR IN THE
DARK.

SPAWN?!

HOLY CHRIST,
WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING
HERE?

LT. COL. AL SIMMONS,
A.K.A. SPAWN, SOME
KIND OF ALLEY
DWELLING STREET-
VIGILANTE-SLASH-
PSYCHO-CASE.

DID
YOU MEAN
WHAT YOU
SAID?

WHAT?

YOU SAID
YOU WOULD DO
ANYTHING TO HAVE
YOUR FRIEND WELL
AGAIN. DID YOU
MEAN IT?

THIS IS THE
BASTARD THAT
COST ME AND
TWITCH OUR
BADGES.

WE WERE TRYING
TO BRING HIM IN
WHEN TWITCH
GOT SHOT.

YEAH
I MEANT
IT. WHAT'S
IT TO YOU?
WHAT
DO YOU
WANT?

HEY,
GET
AWAY
FROM
HIM!

I SAID
GET AWAY
FROM HIM,
YOU BIG RED
FREAK!!
WHAT DO YOU
THINK YOU'RE
DOING?!!



WHAT
THE
HELL
WAS
THAT?

I
SWEAR
TO GOD,
IF YOU
HURT
HIM--!

LISTEN TO
ME AND LISTEN
WELL. YOUR
PARTNER WILL
RECOVER. WHEN
SUNRISE COMES
HE WILL AWAKEN
AND BE IN FULL
HEALTH.

THE
DOCTORS
WILL BE
BAFFLED
AND CALL IT A
MIRACLE. BUT
YOU WILL
KNOW THE
TRUTH.

I AM GOING
TO HOLD YOU
TO YOUR WORD,
MR. BURKE. YOU
BELONG TO
ME NOW.
BOTH
OF YOU!

"BELONG"
TO YOU?
WHAT ARE YOU
TALKING ABOUT,
SIMMONS?

YEAH,
THAT'S RIGHT!
I KNOW YOUR
NAME. I KNOW
YOUR LITTLE
SET-UP.

EX-
GOVERNMENT
SPOOK, PRE-
TENDING TO BE
DEAD... ON THE
RUN FOR SOME
REASON...

I DON'T
KNOW
EXACTLY
WHAT YOUR
SICK LITTLE
GAME IS, BUT
I DON'T WANT
ANY--

LOOK
AT ME,
BURKE.
KNOW
WHAT
I AM.

Ah
JEEZ!

I DO NOT
PRETEND
ANYTHING!
LOOK AT THE
FACE OF YOUR
NEW MASTER
AND UNDER-
STAND... YOU
HAVE MUCH TO
LEARN!

LOOK
AT ME!

LIFE
AND DEATH!
THAT'S LESSON
ONE!

I WILL
CALL ON
YOU SOON.
BE READY.

AND THEN
HE WAS GONE.
JUST LIKE THAT.

I'VE REALLY DONE IT
NOW, TWITCH. WHAT
THE HELL HAVE I
GOTTEN US INTO?



1:12 A.M.

EVER GET THE FEELING THAT YOUR WHOLE LIFE IS ONE LONG, SICK JOKE? THAT SOMEONE, SOMEWHERE IS LAUGHING HIS ASS OFF AT ALL OF THIS?

"LET'S TUNE IN TO ANOTHER GUT-BUSTING EPISODE OF 'CRAP ON SAMMY'! SEE WHAT KIND OF MESS OL' FATTY'S GOT HIMSELF INTO THIS TIME!"

LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER, THAT'S BEEN HOW IT FEELS.

JUST CAN'T SEEM TO CATCH A GODDAMN BREAK.

Oh, HELLO.

Uh, HEY...

I'VE SEEN YOU HERE A LOT LATELY. FAMILY MEMBER?

NO. PARTNER.

I SEE... "LIFE PARTNER"?

WHAT?! NO! PARTNER PARTNER. WE'RE, uh, DETECTIVES...

Oh, MAY I ASK WHAT HAPPENED?

SOME CLOWN TOOK A SHOT AT US. NO RHYME OR REASON. AND NOW TWITCH... WELL THE DOCTORS SAY IT DON'T LOOK SO GOOD.

DON'T GIVE UP HOPE, OKAY. YOU SHOULD PROBABLY GO HOME AND GET SOME REST. YOU LOOK LIKE YOU COULD USE A BREAK.

YEAH. I COULD USE A LOT OF THINGS.

TRouble is I
CAN'T SLEEP. I
JUST KEEP
PLAYING IT OVER
AND OVER IN
MY MIND.

TRYING TO
PUT THE
PIECES TO-
GETHER SO
THEY MAKE
SENSE.

IT'S MY FAULT WE
WERE IN THE
ALLEYS THAT NIGHT.
I INSISTED WE GO
TRACK SIMMONS
DOWN. TWITCH
ONLY CAME ALONG
TO WATCH MY BACK.

SO WHAT HAPPENS?
WE DON'T FIND
SPAWNY AND
DECIDE TO CALL
IT A NIGHT.

BUT THEN SOME
OLD GUY COMES
OUT OF NOWHERE.
HE WHIPS OUT A
ROD AND STARTS
SHOOTING! SO I
RETURN FIRE
AND TAKE THE
BASTARD DOWN.

THE SHOOTER
WAS D.O.A. ...
NEVER EVEN GOT
A CHANCE TO
BEAT A REASON
OUT OF HIS
USELESS HIDE.

AND GET THIS. I FIND OUT LATER
THAT THIS FOSSIL WAS JUST LET
OUTTA THE PEN LIKE 10 MINUTES
BEFORE HE STARTS SPITTIN'
LEAD AT US.

BASTARD TOOK A 30-YEAR YAWN
FOR MURDER ONE AND TO CELE-
BRATE HIS FIRST NIGHT OF FREEDOM
HE DECIDES HE'S GOING TO
PERFORATE A COUPLA STRANGERS.

WHAT'S THIS CITY COMING TO?
AND TO TOP IT ALL OFF, NOW I
SEEM TO HAVE MADE A DEAL
WITH THE KING OF THE
WALKING DEAD.

THEN I TURN
AROUND AND SEE
MY PARTNER, MY
BEST FRIEND,
LYING ON THE
GROUND WITH A
BULLET HOLE IN
THE FOREHEAD.

"I WILL CALL
ON YOU SOON.
BE READY."
WHAT THE
HELL WAS
THAT? CHRIST,
I'M SO TIRED...

I GUESS IT'S
BEGINNING.

5:15 A.M.

zzzzzzzz

Huh?
WHAZZAT?

THIRD HOMELESS
MURDER VICTIM
FOUND IN BETHLEHEM
S!

7:41 A.M.

I HEAD BACK TO THE HOSPITAL TO CHECK ON TWITCH. SEE IF SPAWN KEPT HIS PART OF THE BARGAIN.

TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, I AIN'T HOLDING MY BREATH.

WELL, I'LL BE DAMNED! LOOK AT THAT. ROSY-CHEEKED AND WIDE AWAKE, JUST LIKE PROMISED.

JEEZ, LOOK AT HELEN. IF SHE WAS BEAMING ANY BRIGHTER I'D NEED SUN BLOCK.

SAM! GOOD TO SEE YOU, MY FRIEND!

CAN YOU BELIEVE IT? OUR PRAYERS WERE ANSWERED. THE DOCTORS SAY IT WAS A MIRACLE!

THEY WANT TO KEEP HIM ANOTHER DAY OR SO, TO MAKE SURE, BUT THEY SAY HE'S GOING TO BE FINE!

TWITCH, OLD BUDDY... I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW GOOD IT IS TO SEE YOU BETTER. MAN, I WAS REALLY WORRIED THERE FOR A WHILE.

OK, YOU'RE BACK. YOUR FRIEND'S BETTER? THAT'S WONDERFUL! I TOLD YOU NOT TO GIVE UP HOPE.

YEAH... LOOK AT THEM. LOOK AT HIS FAMILY. I HATE TO EVEN INTERRUPT.

BY THE WAY, I'M SARAH. SARAH FROST. I'M A DOCTOR HERE. I ALSO RUN THE OUT-REACH CENTER DOWN ON HOUSTON. "SAVING GRACE."

YEAH, I HEARD OF THAT. I'M SAM. SAM BURKE. GOOD TO MEET YOU, SARAH.

SO MAYBE I WAS WRONG. MAYBE THINGS ARE LOOKING UP.

4:22 P.M. ...
BACK AT
THE OFFICE.

AIN'T A PRETTY PICTURE
WE GOT HERE. THREE
HOMELESS PERSONS
DEAD IN FOUR DAYS.

CONNECTED? WELL,
THERE'S NOTHING
CONCLUSIVE, BUT THE
MEDIA SEEMS TO THINK
SO. SO DOES SPAWN.

DAMN, I WISH I COULD
FIGURE HIM OUT. HE
CAN'T POSSIBLY BE WHAT
HE SAYS HE IS, CAN HE?

STILL, I SAW
WHAT I SAW.

MADE SOME CALLS, GOT
WHAT I COULD ON THIS
CASE. AIN'T MUCH, THOUGH.

> Sigh <

FIRST VICTIM WAS
FOUND FOUR NIGHTS
AGO, SLUMPED AGAINST
AN ALLEY WALL. THROAT
SLIT EAR TO EAR.
PERFECT, SCALPEL CLEAN.

VICTIM WAS
IDENTIFIED AS
RONNY "WHISTLER"
ENTWHISTLE. HAD
A BLOOD ALCOHOL
LEVEL LIKE TED
KENNEDY AT
OKTOBERFEST. NO
SIGNS OF A STRUGGLE.

A FEW YARDS AWAY, AN EMPTY GIN
BOTTLE WAS FOUND. HAD THE VICTIM'S
FINGERPRINTS AND THOSE OF A
SECOND PARTY, AS WELL AS SMALL
TRACES OF THE VICTIM'S BLOOD.

CLERK AT NEIGHBORHOOD LIQUOR
STORE REMEMBERS ENTWHISTLE
BUYING THE BOOZE. SAID HE CAME
IN A LOT, ALWAYS ASKED FOR THE
RECEIPT.

AIN'T THAT RICH? A GUY
DOESN'T HAVE A POT TO
PISS IN BUT HE'S SAVING
HIS RECEIPTS.

SO FIGURE ONE BUM KILLS ANOTHER
FOR A BOTTLE OF HOOCH, RIGHT?
WORSE THINGS HAPPEN IN THIS
CITY EVERY DAY.

Aw, BUT THERE'S A TWIST: SEEMS
ENTWHISTLE WAS WANTED FOR A
BAG JOB HE PULLED IN VEGAS THREE
YEARS AGO. PISSSED OFF A LOT OF
THE WRONG PEOPLE TOO.

SO MAYBE IT'S HIS PAST
CATCHING UP TO HIM.

BUT THEN, THIRTY HOURS
LATER CORPSE #2 SHOWS
UP. MALE HISPANIC, 25-35.
NO I.D. YET.

WENT INTO CONVULSIONS
AFTER SHOOTING UP A
DOSE OF CHINESE ROCK
UNDER A BRIDGE LESS
THAN 10 BLOCKS FROM
THE FIRST VICTIM.

AGAIN, SO WHAT?
JUNKIES O.D. ALL THE
TIME. BUT THIS ONE
DIDN'T O.D. HE WAS
POISONED. THE
SYRINGE WAS TREATED
WITH SOME KIND OF
NEURO-TOXIN.

NOT THE SMACK, THE SYRINGE.

THE RIG'S BEEN TRACED TO A
MOBILE NEEDLE-SWAPPING
PROGRAM. A BIG WHITE TRUCK
THAT BRINGS FRESH NEEDLES
TO DRUG ADDICTS. THAT'S YER
TAX DOLLARS AT WORK, FOLKS.

AND FINALLY, CONTESTANT #3, NIGHT
BEFORE LAST. AFRICAN-AMERICAN
FEMALE, AGE 60-65.

FOUND IN A DUMPSTER, WITH
HER FREAKIN' HANDS CUT OFF
AND HER TONGUE SLICED OUT.
NO I.D. ON HER EITHER.

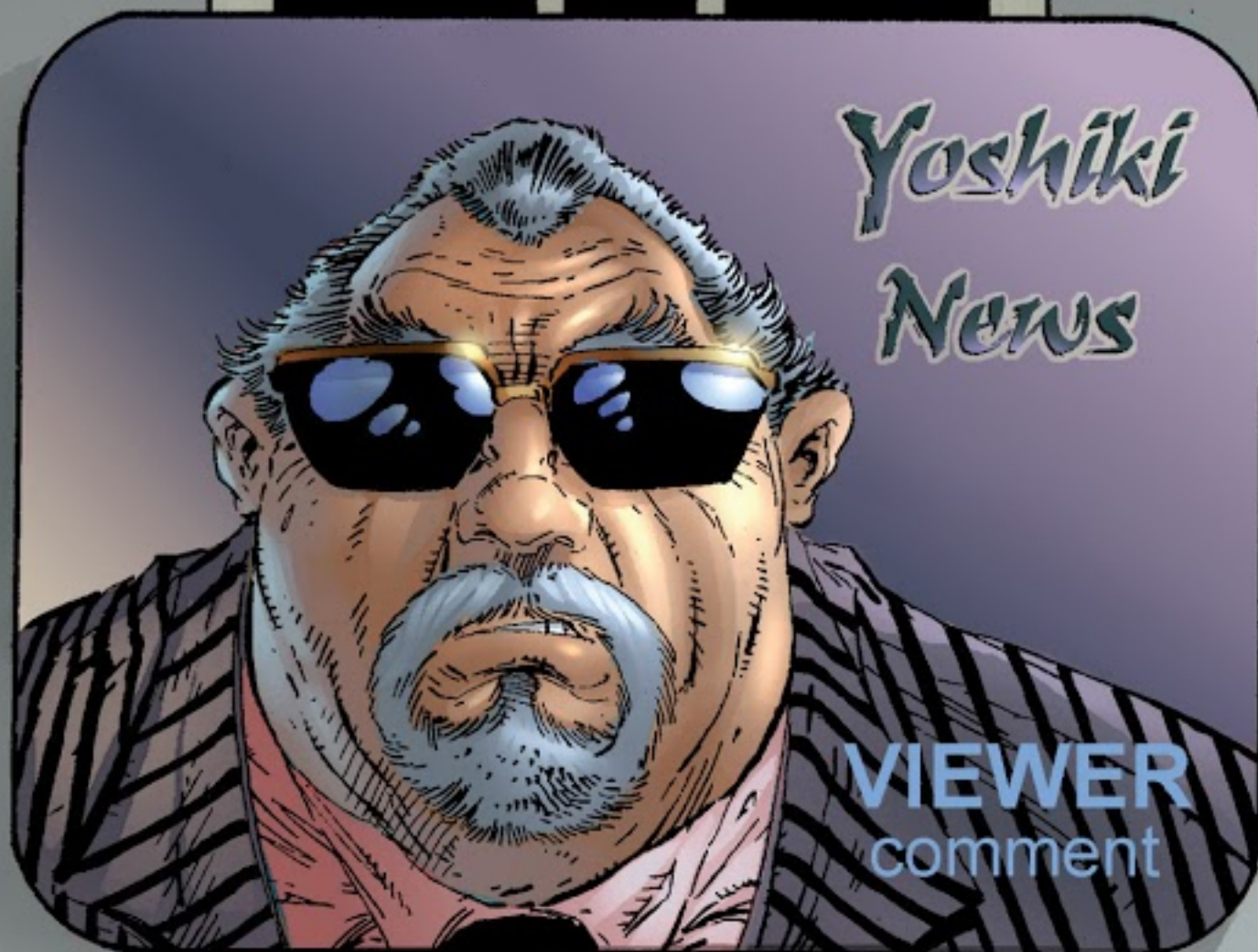
A LOT OF BLOOD, BUT
NONE OF IT LEADING
IN ANY DIRECTION. I
GOT A BAD FEELING
THIS IS GOING TO GET
WORSE BEFORE IT
GETS BETTER.



...INCREASINGLY GRUESOME STRING OF MURDERS AMONG NEW YORK CITY'S HOMELESS POPULATION HAS SPARKED OUTCRIES FROM MANY CORNERS. WHILE NO CONCRETE LINK BETWEEN THE CRIMES HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED, CITY OFFICIALS ARE PLEDGING THEIR SUPPORT, AGREEING TO OPEN UP EMERGENCY SHELTERS UNTIL THE KILLER OR KILLERS ARE APPREHENDED. POLICE COULD NOT RELEASE ANY INFORMATION ON THEIR PROGRESS IN THE CASE, BUT INSIST THEY ARE "PURSUING THE MATTER WITH ALL DUE DILIGENCE."



THERE'S NO SHORTAGE OF *ENVY* DIRECTED TOWARD THE MAYOR'S OFFICE LATELY, AND IT'S COMING FROM NO LESS THAN THE EXECS AT THE *TOP AD AGENCIES*. THE REDEFINITION OF THE HOMELESS AS "OUTDOORSMEN" AND THE IMPLIED MAKEOVER OF THE CITY'S STREETS AS "THE UNTAMED FRONTIER" HAVE BEEN *GENUINELY* INSPIRED EXPANSIONS OF THE THEME-PARK ATMOSPHERE THIS ADMINISTRATION HAS EMBRACED. RECENT YEARS HAVE SEEN GROWING NUMBERS OF THE POOR AND WRETCHED, AND AT LAST THEY HAVE A DESIGNATED *PLACE* IN THE *SCHEME* OF THINGS!



WELL, IMAGINE MY *SURPRISE!* IT LOOKS TO BE MORE OF THE SAME OLD SAME OLD IN THE "*NEW*" *NEW YORK!* WHILE THE ILLUSTRIOUS MAYOR WOULD LIKE TO PRETEND THAT THERE ARE *NO* REMAINING HOMELESS PEOPLE IN HIS FAIR CITY, THE CURRENT SPATE OF VIOLENCE HAS PUT A MIGHTY DING IN THE CITY'S CAREFULLY CONSTRUCTED, FAMILY-FRIENDLY *IMAGE*. A SPOKESPERSON FOR TOURIST RELATIONS CONCEDES THAT THE LATEST MURDER SPREE MIGHT "VERY WELL HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE CITY'S NATIONAL PROFILE." MIGHT I *DIFFER* WITH THIS ESTEEMED SHILL FOR THE GODS OF COMMERCE? IF ANYTHING, OUR TOWN CAN NOW *TRULY* BOAST OF HAVING SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE! FROM THE THEATRE DISTRICT IN MIDTOWN TO BUTCHER-TOWN IN THE BOWERY, THERE'S NO DENYING THAT *IT'S A HELLUVA TOWN.*

TWO DAYS LATER.
10:03 P.M.

GOT A CALL FROM
AN OLD FRIEND
ON THE FORCE.
A FOURTH BODY
WAS FOUND.
THIS TIME IN
CENTRAL PARK.

THE MEDIA JACKALS
ARE ALREADY
PICKING OVER THE
CARCASS BY THE
TIME I ARRIVE.

HEY, SAM.

SILBERT.
WHAT WE
GOT HERE?

WE MAKE
HIM A WHITE
MALE, MAYBE 50
YEARS OLD. HOME-
LESS, JUST LIKE
THE REST. COUPLA
JOGGERS SPOTTED
HIM WHILE
RUNNING.

THEY'RE
STILL IN
SHOCK.

DETECTIVE
S.O. SILBERT.
"S.O.S." FOR
SHORT. HE'S
A FINE COP.
ONE OF THE
GOOD ONES.

HOLD ON
TO YOUR
LUNCH, SAMMY.
I TELL YA, I
NEVER SEEN ANY-
THING LIKE
THIS ONE.

Hmmph.

SILBERT'S
SEEN IT
ALL IN HIS
DAY. TAKES
A LOT TO
SHAKE
HIM. THIS
CAN'T BE
GOOD.



SILBERT WAS RIGHT. IT'S ALL I CAN DO TO KEEP THAT LAST CHILI DOG FROM MAKING AN ENCORE.

WHITE MALE. APPROXIMATELY 50 YEARS OLD.

STRIPPED NAKED AND CRUCIFIED TO A GODDAMN TREE WITH A PAIR OF TEMPERED STEEL HUNTING KNIVES.

CASTRATED... THE GENITALS SHOVED UP INSIDE THE ABDOMEN.

JESUS CHRIST.

AND TO TOP IT OFF, A TYPEWRITTEN NOTE LITERALLY PINNED TO THE VICTIM'S CHEST.

OUR KILLER'S GETTING BOLDER.

ALL THE WHILE, SOME JERKWAD FROM THE POST IS TAKING PHOTOS LIKE IT WAS A FREAKIN' FASHION SHOW.

THIS WAS A MURDER CASE. NOW IT'S A GODDAMN MEDIA EVENT.

2:09 A.M.
THE MORGUE.

HERE
YA GO.
GENUINE
"PRODUCTO
de CUBA."

A WELL-PLACED
INCENTIVE GETS
ME IN FOR THE
PRIVATE TOUR.

MUCHOS
GRACIAS,
AMIGO.
HERE. RUB THIS
UNDER YOUR
NOSE. IT
KILLS THE
SMELL.

Sniff

HOW COME
YOU DON'T USE
THAT STUFF FOR
THE SMELL?

Ah, YOU GET
USED TO IT AFTER
A WHILE.

SO HERE HE
IS, THE STIFF
D'JOUR. NOTHING
TOO UNUSUAL, IF
YOU DON'T COUNT
THE FACT HIS NADS
ARE TICKLING
HIS KIDNEYS.

BIG
GUY. MUSTA
PUT UP A
HELLUVA
FIGHT.



NOPE. NO
STRUGGLE. HE WAS
DRUGGED FIRST.

WHAT WITH?

WE'RE STILL
DOING THE
WORK UP.

KEEP ME
POSTED.



GOT
SOMETHING
ELSE TO SHOW
YOU.

YEAH?
WHAT'S
THAT?

REMEMBER
THE GUY WHO
TOOK A SHOT AT
YOU? THIS IS HIM.
Ooh... GETTING
A LITTLE
RIPE.

INTERESTING
THING IS, YOU
AIN'T AS GOOD OF A
SHOT AS YOU THINK
YOU ARE. YOU GOT
HIM IN THE
SHOULDER. D'YA
KNOW THAT?

IT SHOULDN'T
HAVE KILLED HIM.
WE CHECKED FOR
EVERYTHING. HEART
ATTACK, STROKE,
ADRENALINE SPIKE.
NOTHING.

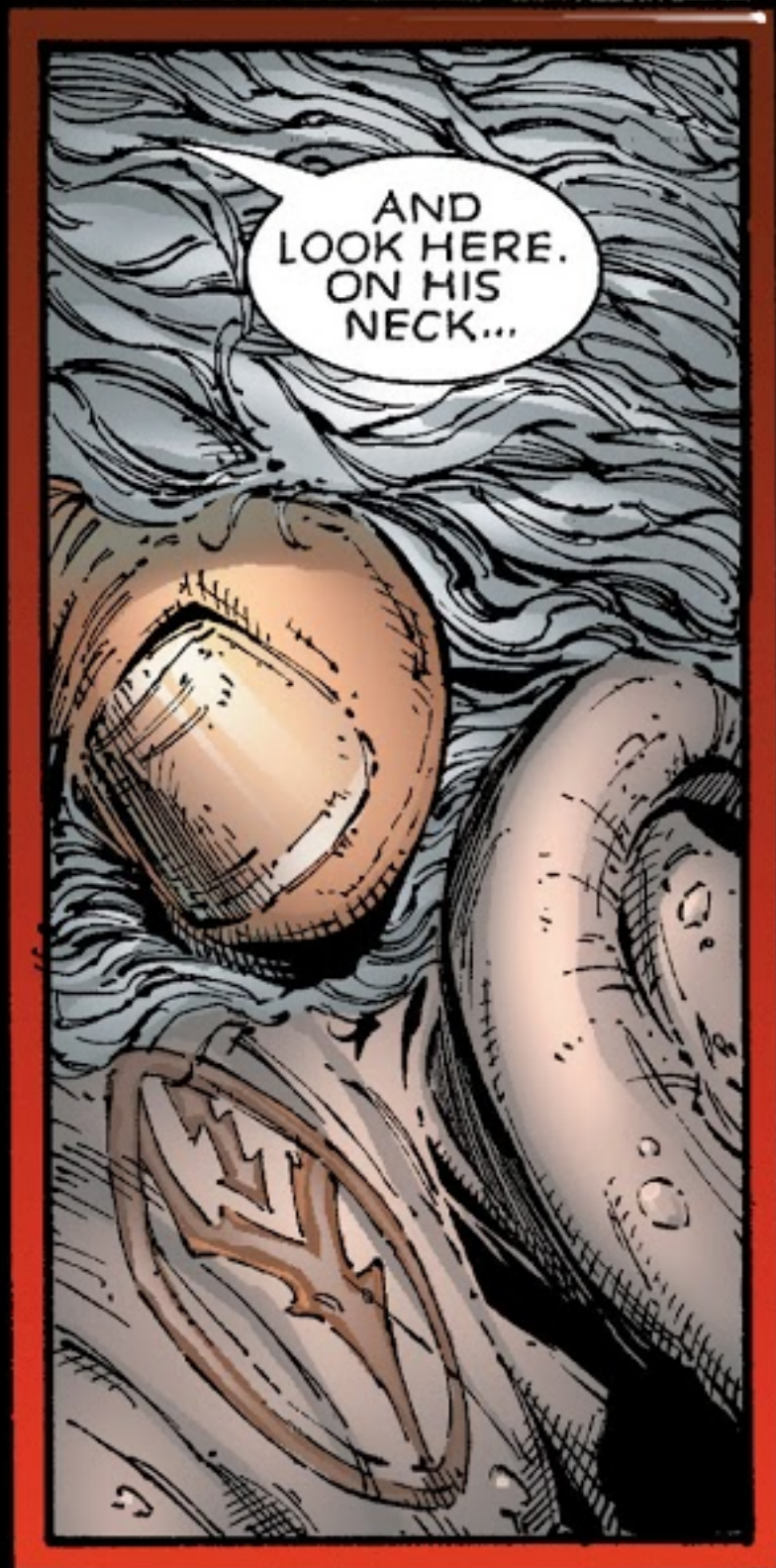
IT'S LIKE
HE JUST
DIED. LIKE THE
LIFE JUST WENT
OUT OF HIM,
LIKE A
CANDLE.



AND
LOOK HERE.
ON HIS
NECK...

WHAT
THE HELL
IS THAT?

BEATS
ME. SOME
KIND OF BRAND
OR MARK.
FREAKY,
huh?



2:19 A.M.

GOD DAMN IT, THERE'S ANOTHER ONE.

WHEN I WUZZA LIDDLE BIDDY BABY, M'MOMMA SHE ROCK ME INNA CRA-DLE...

HEY! BUDDY! YEAH, YOU!

I DI'NT DO NUFFIN.

YEAH-YEAH. I KNOW. AIN'T YOU HEARD? THE STREETS AIN'T SUCH A SMART PLACE TO BE THESE DAYS.

WHY DON'T'CHA GET IN AND LET ME GIVE YOU A RIDE TO THE SHELTER. YOU'LL BE SAFE THERE.

I DIDN'T DO **NUFFIN**, OFF-I-SUH! SWEAR!

YEAH. I KNOW. CALM DOWN. I'M TRYING TO HELP YOU OUT OF HERE.

WHAT?... I DON'T... BUT I DIDN'T DO NUFFIN... DON'T HURT ME... PLEASE...



WELL,
SPAWN...

LET'S SEE
IF WE CAN
SHED A LITTLE
LIGHT ON THE
MATTER...

IT'S
HORRIBLE, COG.
THESE MURDERS...
WHEN I CLOSE MY
EYES, I CAN SEE
THEM HAPPENING...
I FEEL THE PAIN
AND THE TERROR
OF THE
VICTIMS...

BUT
I CAN'T
SEE WHO'S
DOING
IT.

IT'S ONLY
GLIMPSES.
FRAG-
MENTS.

PIECES
OF A NIGHT-
MARE THAT
DON'T ADD
UP TO A
WHOLE.

AND IT'S
GETTING WORSE.
SOMEONE'S OUT
THERE PLAYING
SOME SICK
GAME, AND I
INTEND TO
END IT.

WELL,
WE'LL START
WITH STANDARD
REFERENCE
MATERIAL...



Hmm...
NOTHING IN
THE AULDWYCH
GRIMOIRE. LET'S
TRY THE DIARIES
OF ELIPHAS
LEVI.

THIS IS
POINTLESS,
COG. WE'RE
NOT GETTING
ANYWHERE
WITH ALL
THIS...

WAIT!



HERE.
THIS IS IT.
THIS IS WHAT
I SAW AT THE
MORGUE.



Hmm... IN THE
SERPENTINE ADDENDUM
OF ALL PLACES. IT'S WRITTEN
IN A SECRET CODE BROUGHT
BACK BY THE *KNIGHTS
TEMPLAR* DURING THE
CRUSADES.

I'M A LITTLE
RUSTY, BUT IT SAYS
SOMETHING ABOUT
THE *HANDS OF EVIL*
OR THE *VESSEL OF
WICKEDNESS*...

THE MARK
APPEARS WHEN
THE *SOUL* EXITS THE
BODY, CONDEMNED
TO HELL FOR THE
CRIMES IT
COMMITTED...

BUT WHAT
DOES IT
MEAN?

MONDAY
MORNING.
10 A.M.

GREAT
TO HAVE
YOU BACK,
BUDDY. I
MADE YOU
A PROTEIN
SHAKE.

WELL,
HOW 'BOUT
A MUSCLE BAR?
GOT DOUBLE
MOCHA OR
BANANA NUT
CRUNCH.

NO.
NO THANKS.
I'M FINE, SIR.
HONESTLY.

Oh, NO
THANK YOU,
SIR.

SIR, I DO
APPRECIATE YOUR
CONCERN AND IN
FACT FIND IT MOST
HEARTENING. BUT WE
DO HAVE SERIOUS
MATTERS TO ATTEND
TO. NAMELY, THIS
GRISLY MURDER
SPREE.

OKAY.
JUST TRYING
TO HELP,
BUDDY.

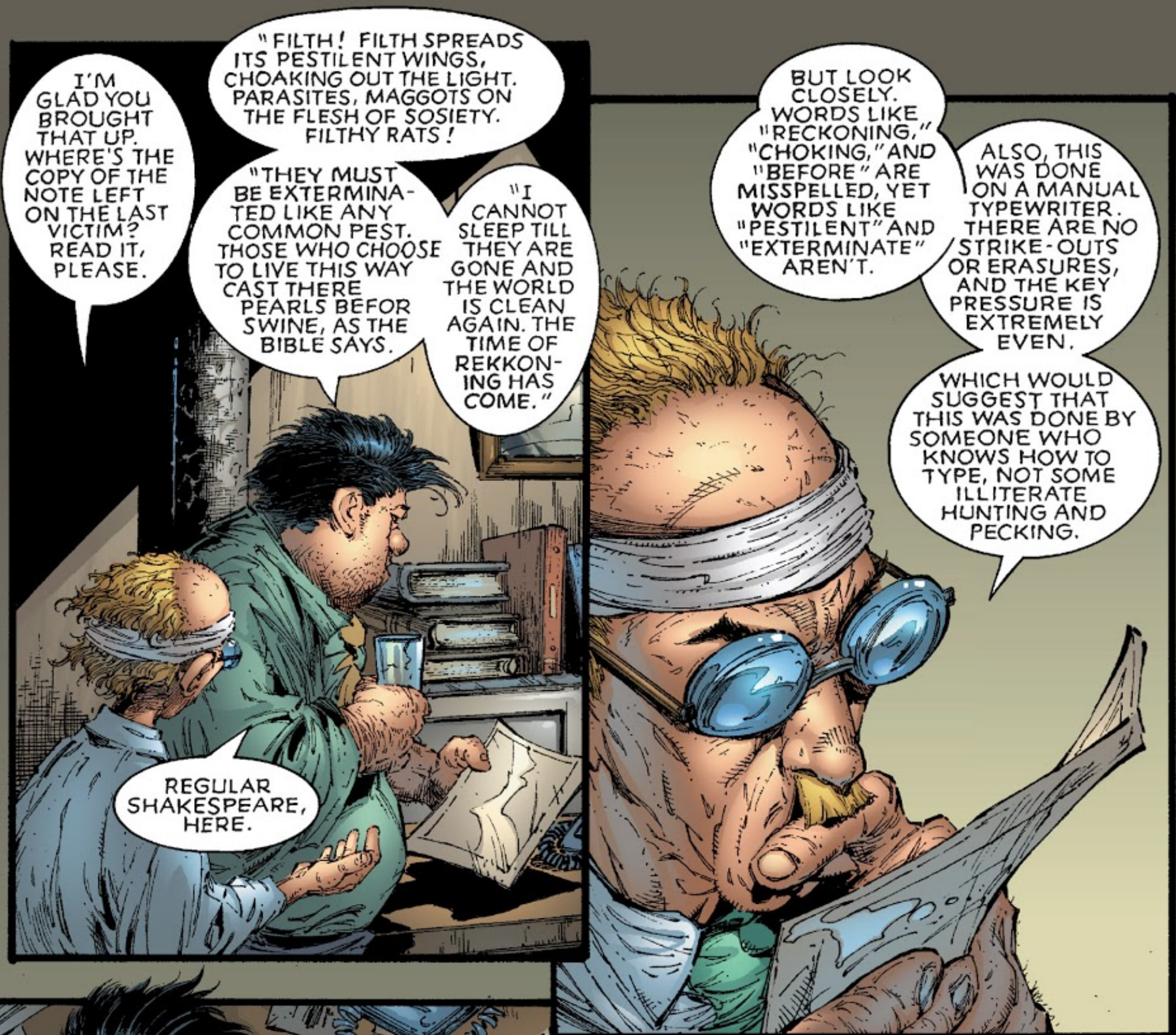
LOOK FOR
CREECH
ACTION
FIGURE

YOUR FIELD WORK
HAS BEEN EXCELLENT, SIR.
BUT THERE'S STILL ALMOST
NOTHING TO GO ON. NO
WITNESSES, NO MOTIVES,
NO SUSPECTS...

JUST A
GROWING
BACKLOG OF
CORPSES.

WHAT WE
DO KNOW IS:
ALL THE MURDERS
HAPPENED AT NIGHT.
I THINK WE CAN
ASSUME THAT THE
KILLER IS SOMEONE
OF CONSIDERABLE
STRENGTH AND
PHYSICAL
STATURE...

AND
THAT
HE CAN'T
SPELL FOR
BEANS.



I'M GLAD YOU BROUGHT THAT UP. WHERE'S THE COPY OF THE NOTE LEFT ON THE LAST VICTIM? READ IT, PLEASE.

"FILTH! FILTH SPREADS ITS PESTILENT WINGS, CHOAKING OUT THE LIGHT. PARASITES, MAGGOTS ON THE FLESH OF SOCIETY. FILTHY RATS!"

"THEY MUST BE EXTERMINATED LIKE ANY COMMON PEST. THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO LIVE THIS WAY CAST THERE PEARLS BEFORE SWINE, AS THE BIBLE SAYS."

"I CANNOT SLEEP TILL THEY ARE GONE AND THE WORLD IS CLEAN AGAIN. THE TIME OF REKKONING HAS COME."

BUT LOOK CLOSELY. WORDS LIKE "RECKONING," "CHOKING," AND "BEFORE" ARE MISSPELLED, YET WORDS LIKE "PESTILENT" AND "EXTERMINATE" AREN'T.

ALSO, THIS WAS DONE ON A MANUAL TYPEWRITER. THERE ARE NO STRIKE-OUTS OR ERASURES, AND THE KEY PRESSURE IS EXTREMELY EVEN.

WHICH WOULD SUGGEST THAT THIS WAS DONE BY SOMEONE WHO KNOWS HOW TO TYPE, NOT SOME ILLITERATE HUNTING AND PECKING.

REGULAR SHAKESPEARE, HERE.



YOU THINK THE KILLER'S TRYING TO THROW US OFF THE TRACK, MAKE THE COPS LOOK FOR A RETARD RELIGIOUS FREAK?

IT IS A POSSIBILITY, SIR.



GENTLEMEN, WHAT HAVE YOU FOUND?



JEEZ
SPAWN! YOU
SCARED THE
CRAP OUTTA
US!

I SAID,
WHAT HAVE
YOU FOUND!
THIS MADNESS
MUST BE STOPPED.
THE KILLER'S
STILL OUT THERE
... I CAN FEEL
IT.

I WANT
THIS ENDED!
NOW!



YEAH,
SO DO WE.
WE'RE DOING
THE BEST WE
CAN, SO UNLESS
YOU HAVE
ANY...



RING

HELLO?
YEAH, THIS
IS SAM.
Oh MY GOD...
WHEN?
YEAH...

YEAH...
HOLD ON,
LET ME
WRITE THIS
DOWN... GOT
IT. OKAY.
THANKS.

SIR?

THEY
JUST
FOUND
ANOTHER
BODY.

THIS
TIME
IT'S A
CHILD.



TO BE
CONTINUED...

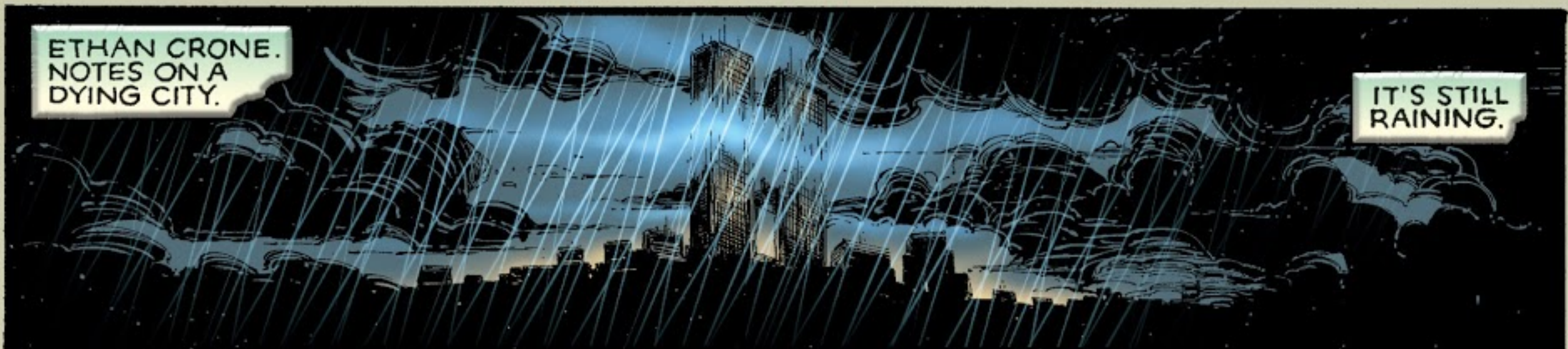


79

DIGITAL
EDITION

SPAWN





ETHAN CRONE.
NOTES ON A
DYING CITY.

IT'S STILL
RAINING.



DOWN ON THE STREET, THE
FACELESS DRONES SCURRY
LIKE RATS, SEEKING SHELTER
FROM THE TEMPEST.

THEY FIGHT OVER TAXIS, PUSH AND
SHOVE THEIR WAY ALONG THE SIDE-
WALKS, DIVING INTO DOORWAYS
FOR A MOMENT'S RESPITE.



LET IT RAIN FOR A THOUSAND YEARS
AND IT WILL NOT BE ENOUGH TO
WASH CLEAN THE STREETS
OF THIS CITY.

THE FILTH IS A PART OF US.
IT'S IN OUR LUNGS, IT'S
BENEATH OUR SKIN. IT
STAINS US SO DEEP WE
WILL ALL CARRY IT TO
OUR GRAVES.



NEW YORK CITY AT THE END
OF THE MILLENNIUM. A DARK
DRAMA IS BEING
PLAYED OUT.

A GRAND OPERA
WRITTEN IN BLOOD.



SOMEWHERE OUT THERE, A
MURDERER IS ON THE
LOOSE. HIDING AMONG
THE FACELESS MASSES...

... LYING
COILED
IN THE
SHADOWS,
WAITING
TO STRIKE.



MEANWHILE, I SIT AND
WATCH FROM THE RAFTERS
AND WRITE IT ALL DOWN.

SOMEONE IS KILLING THE HOMELESS OF MANHATTAN, DISCARDING RAGGED SCRAPS OF HUMANITY IN THE ALLEYWAYS, OR NAILED TO TREES IN THE PARK.

THE "EXTERMINATOR"-- THAT'S WHAT THEY'RE CALLING HIM (OR HER, OR IT)... A RATHER COLORFULLY GRUESOME APPELLATION, IS IT NOT?



HE LEAVES CRYPTIC NOTES ABOUT A "GREAT CLEANSING," ABOUT "INSECTS BENEATH HIS FEET." HE MAKES THREATS AND MOCKS THE AUTHORITIES.

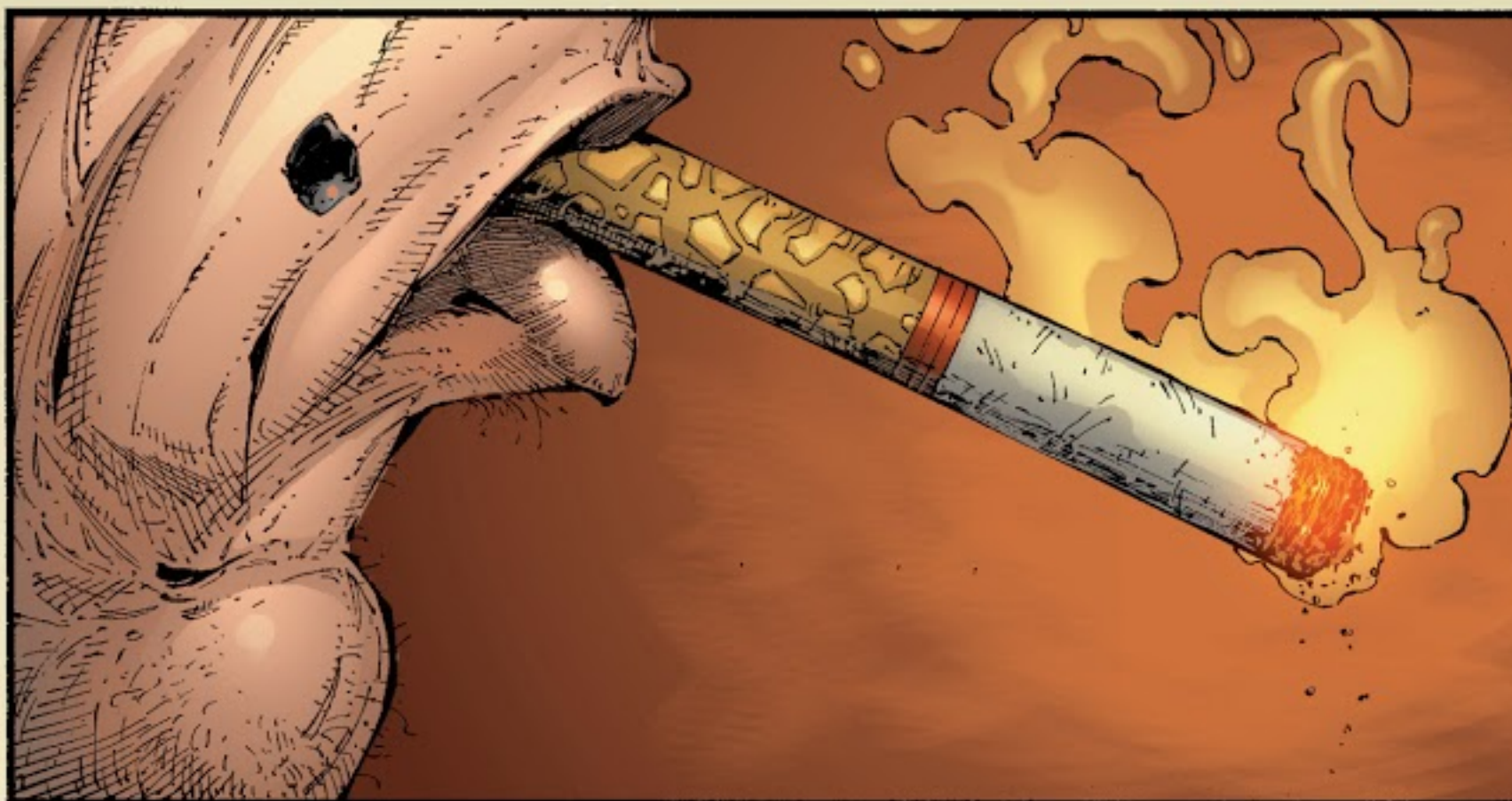
reason behind all this bloodshed. They're not looking at the big picture. It's not about motives or methods or methods or clues. It's about the drama, the tension, the rising action, the false leads and the stunning denouement... It's a good murder. And this one's better than the last. The only question is, How will it end?

THE CITY'S IN AN UP-ROAR. THE POLICE ARE STARVED FOR A MOTIVE, AS THOUGH THERE COULD BE A RATIONAL REASON BEHIND ALL THIS BLOODSHED.



THEY'RE NOT LOOKING AT THE BIG PICTURE. IT'S NOT ABOUT MOTIVES OR METHODS OR CLUES.

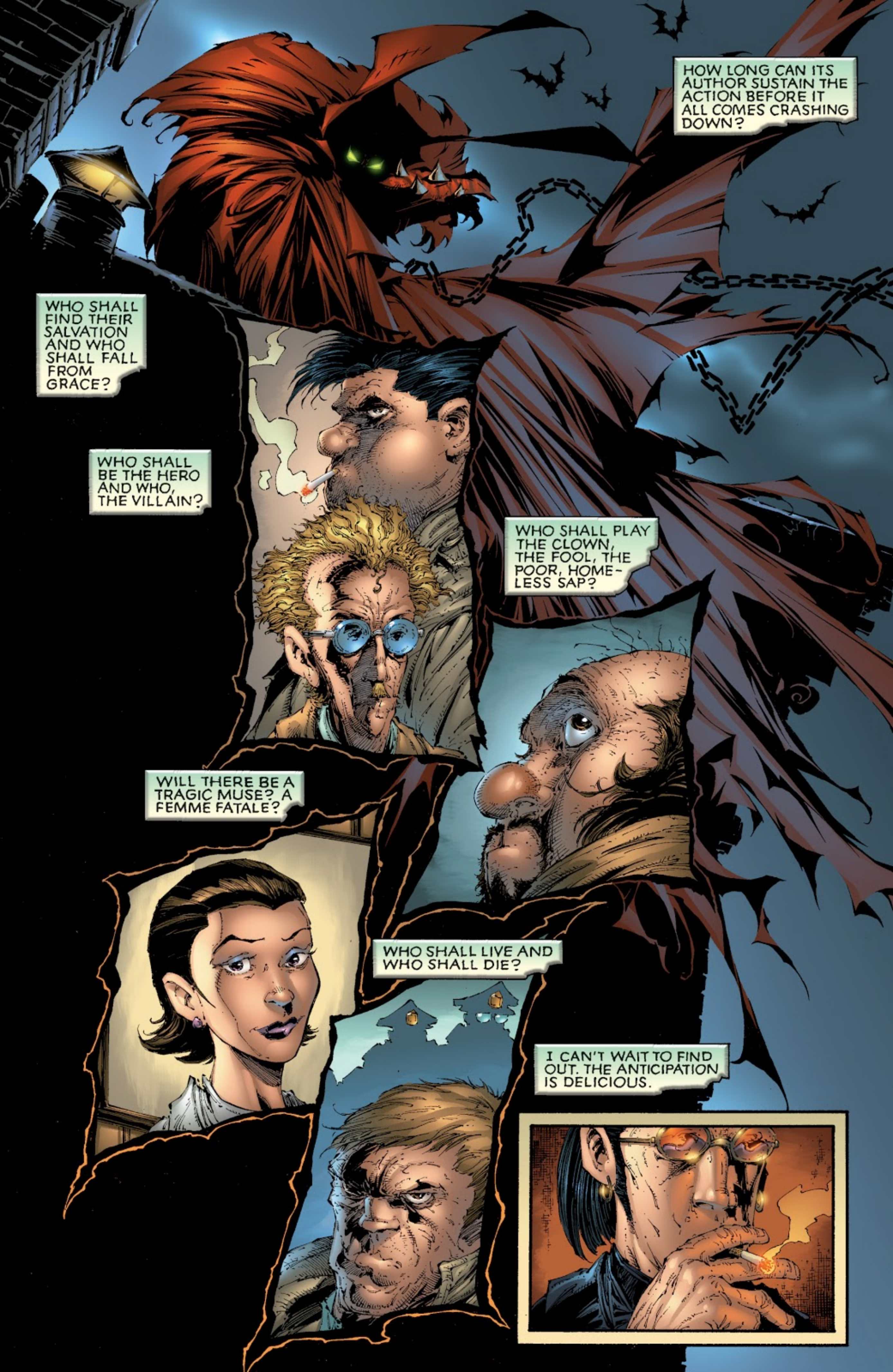
IT'S ABOUT THE **DRAMA**, THE TENSION, THE RISING ACTION, THE FALSE LEADS AND THE STUNNING DENOUEMENT...



EVERYONE LOVES A GOOD MURDER. AND THIS ONE'S BETTER THAN MOST.

THE ONLY REAL QUESTION IS, HOW WILL IT **END**?





HOW LONG CAN ITS
AUTHOR SUSTAIN THE
ACTION BEFORE IT
ALL COMES CRASHING
DOWN?

WHO SHALL
FIND THEIR
SALVATION
AND WHO
SHALL FALL
FROM
GRACE?

WHO SHALL
BE THE HERO
AND WHO,
THE VILLAIN?

WHO SHALL PLAY
THE CLOWN,
THE FOOL, THE
POOR, HOME-
LESS SAP?

WILL THERE BE A
TRAGIC MUSE? A
FEMME FATALE?

WHO SHALL LIVE AND
WHO SHALL DIE?

I CAN'T WAIT TO FIND
OUT. THE ANTICIPATION
IS DELICIOUS.



IT'S A STORY WITH ALL THE CLASSIC ELEMENTS OF A GREAT TRAGEDY AND I AM GRATEFUL FOR IT. BUT IT WILL END. AND SOON, I PREDICT.

IF THE VICTIMS HAD BEEN SOCIALITE WIVES OR MAFIA DONS, THE MURDERS COULD HAVE GONE ON INDEFINITELY.

BUT IT IS THE WEAKEST AMONG US THAT ARE BEING HUNTED, THE POOR DISCARDED WRETCHES OF SOCIETY, AND WE WILL NOT STAND FOR IT.

SOMEONE MUST PAY FOR WAKING OUR SHAME. SOMEONE MUST PAY FOR FORCING THIS CITY TO CARE ABOUT THAT WHICH IT WOULD PREFER TO IGNORE.



GOOD EVENING, MR. CRONE. GOING OUT?

YES, I AM. THANK YOU.



JUST A MINUTE, PLEASE...



HERE YA GO. TAKE IT EASY OUT THERE, MR. CRONE. IT'S A WICKED NIGHT OUT.

DON'T BE ABSURD, MY GOOD MAN. IT'S A BEAUTIFUL NIGHT.



AS FOR ME, THERE'S LITTLE LEFT TO DO BUT WAIT... AND WATCH...

A BEAUTIFUL NIGHT TO BE ALIVE.

... AND CELEBRATE MY GOOD FORTUNE.



THE
PRECINCT.

HE OWE
YOU MONEY?
MAYBE HE
TRIED TO GET A
LITTLE TOO
FRIENDLY?

TELL ME
THE TRUTH,
BOBBY. WHAT
WAS IT WITH
YOU AND THIS
WHISTLER
GUY?

I DIDN'T
KILL HIM.
HE WAS MY
FRIEND.

JUST
TELL US WHY
YOU *KILLED*
HIM.

YOU *GOT* NO
FRIENDS, WE
BOTH KNOW THAT.
C'MON, BOBBY,
YOUR PRINTS WERE
FOUND AT THE
CRIME SCENE!

I SAW HIM...
THAT'S ALL. I
MEAN WE SHARED
A DRINK, IS ALL.
ALL US BUMS
SHARE
THINGS.

HOW
TOUCHING.
THIS BE-
FORE OR
AFTER
YOU KILLED
HIM?

Huh?

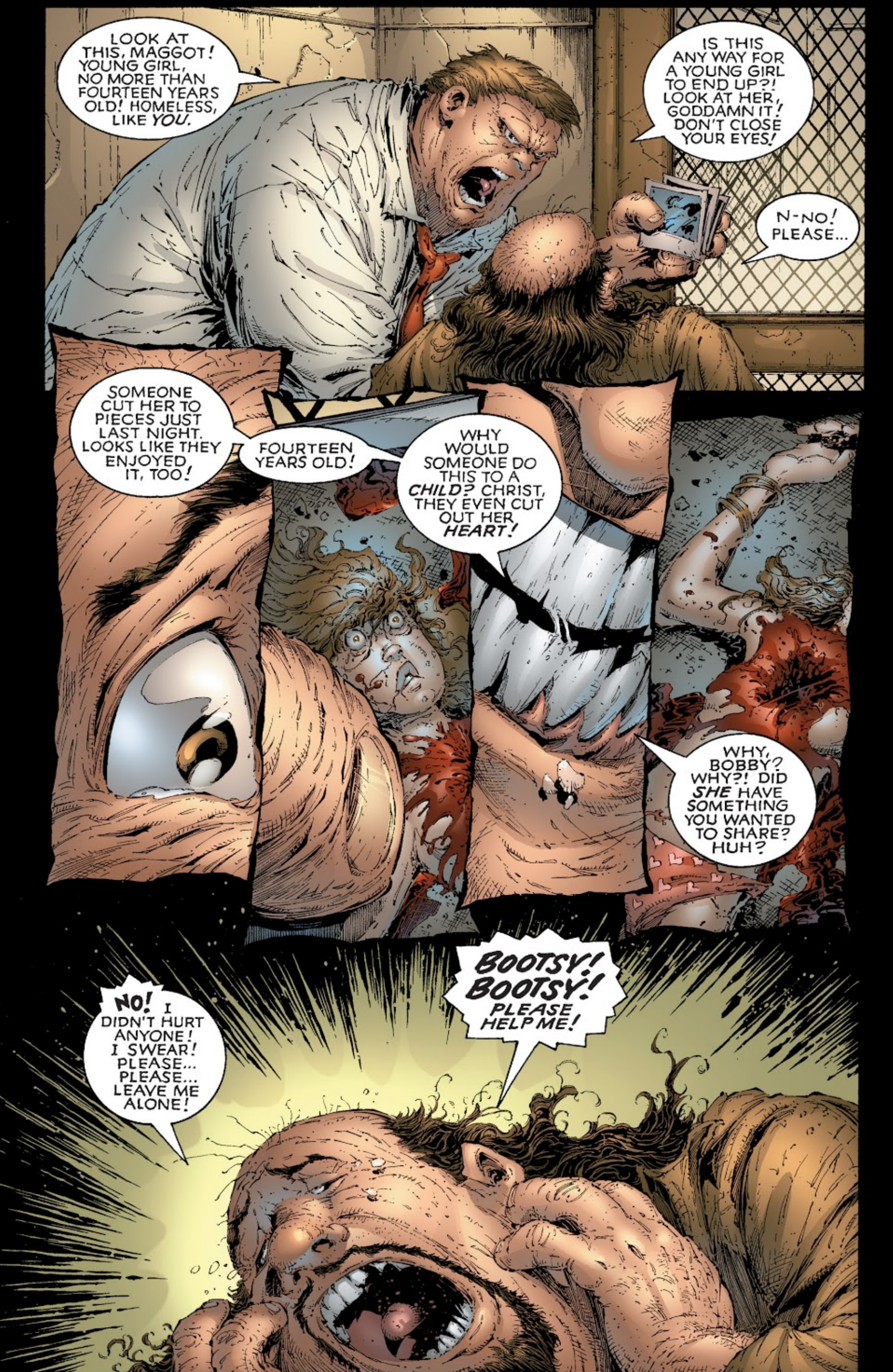
HIS *BLOOD* WAS
ON THE BOTTLE,
GENIUS! HOW DO YOU
EXPLAIN THAT?

I DIDN'T
KILL HIM. I
JUST-- I JUST
NEEDED A DRINK
REAL BAD.

WHAT'RE YOU
SAYING? YOU TOOK
A BOTTLE OFF YOUR
DEAD PAL?! DIDN'T
THINK TO CALL AN
AMBULANCE?!
MURPHY, HOW
SICK IS THIS?

PRETTY
SICK, SILBERT.
IN FACT, I'D SAY
I'M SHOCKED AND
DISGUSTED.

ME
TOO. YOU
KNOW
WHAT
ELSE IS
SICK?!



LOOK AT THIS, MAGGOT! YOUNG GIRL, NO MORE THAN FOURTEEN YEARS OLD! HOMELESS, LIKE YOU.

IS THIS ANY WAY FOR A YOUNG GIRL TO END UP?! LOOK AT HER, GODDAMN IT! DON'T CLOSE YOUR EYES!

N-NO! PLEASE...

SOMEONE CUT HER TO PIECES JUST LAST NIGHT. LOOKS LIKE THEY ENJOYED IT, TOO!

FOURTEEN YEARS OLD!

WHY WOULD SOMEONE DO THIS TO A *CHILD*? CHRIST, THEY EVEN CUT OUT HER *HEART*!

WHY, BOBBY? WHY?! DID *SHE* HAVE SOMETHING YOU WANTED TO SHARE? HUH?

NO! I DIDN'T HURT ANYONE! I SWEAR! PLEASE... PLEASE... LEAVE ME ALONE!

BOOTSY! BOOTSY!
PLEASE HELP ME!



Aw, CHRIST
HERE WE GO
AGAIN! YOU CAN
STOP BAWLIN' FOR
YOUR FAIRY GOD-
MOTHER, OR WHO-
EVER THIS
"BOOTS" IS!

YOU'RE
UP TO YOUR
NECK IN THIS,
AND YOU'RE ALL
ALONE.

I'M LOOKING
FOR A CONFESSION,
PAL! WHAT'S YOUR
DEAL, BOBBY. YOU
HEAR VOICES? IS
THAT IT? DO THE
VOICES TELL YOU
TO KILL BUMS AND
RUNAWAYS?!
HUH?

PLEASE...
LEAVE ME
ALONE... I DIDN'T
DO ANYTHING... I
TOLD YOU EVERY-
THING I KNOW...
EVERYTHING
ABOUT THE
ALLEYS...



HEY MURPHY,
WHO WAS THAT OTHER
SICKO, THE ONE WHO
HEARD VOICES?

"SON
OF SAM"?

YEAH, THAT'S
HIM. "SON OF SAM."
MAYBE THAT'S WHAT
WE GOT HERE.

LISTEN
UP, BOBBY.
I'M GONNA TAKE
A COFFEE BREAK.
YOU GET ONE
PHONE CALL. I
SUGGEST
A GOOD
LAWYER.

Oh GOD,
Oh GOD...
HOW DID THIS
HAPPEN?



BOOTS,
YOU PROMISED
YOU WOULD
LOOK AFTER
ME...



WHO
CAN I
CALL...

I DON'T
KNOW
ANYBODY...
I DON'T...

huh?



GRACE
Community Outreach Center
Dr. Sarah Frost
Client: Jason
38



KA-
CHUNK

C'MON
YOU
BASTARD.



HEY
SAMMY, I
THOUGHT YOU
WERE STICKING
TO THE HEALTH
FOOD. MUSCLE
BARS AN'
THAT.



I AM. THIS
IS A REWARD FOR
MY DILIGENCE.

SO, YOU
DONE BEATING
UP ON POOR
OLD BOBBY? WE
BOTH KNOW HE
DIDN'T KILL
NO ONE.



THAT A
FACT? DUDE GETS
PULLED IN ON A
D.'N' D.* WE RUN HIS
PRINTS, JUST AS A
PRECAUTION.

BINGO!
WE PLACE THE
LITTLE BASTARD AT
THE FIRST CRIME
SCENE. ONLY LEAD WE
GOT SO FAR. AND HE'S
GOT SOME INTEREST-
ING THINGS TO
SAY.

* DRUNK AND
DISORDERLY.

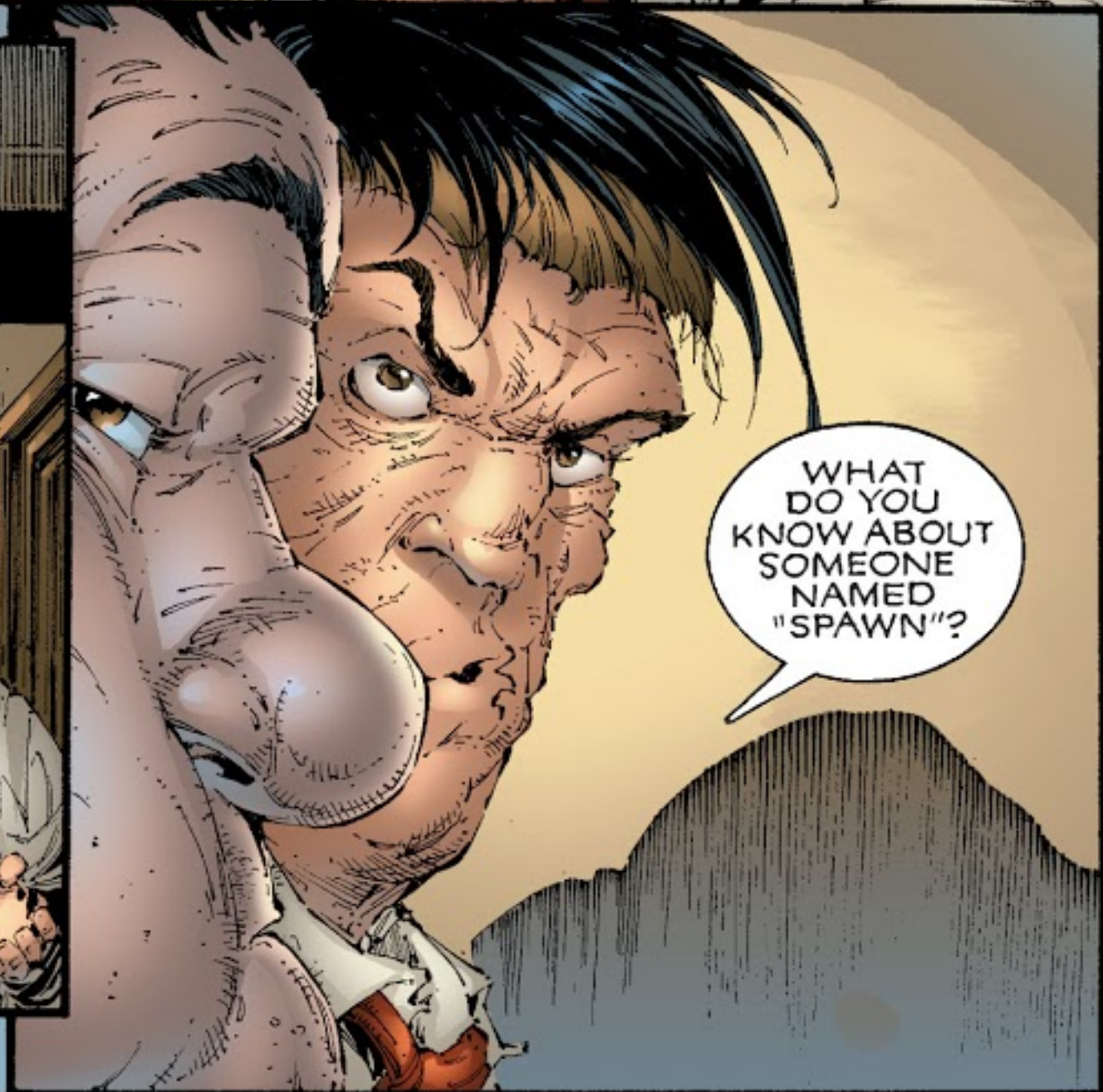


IT'S A DEAD END,
SILBERT. I KNOW THE
PRESSURE'S ON AND YOU
GOTTA PLAY HARDBALL. FINE.
BUT BOTTOM LINE,
BOBBY'S NO KILLER.

WHO
KNOWS?
MAYBE HE'S UNSTABLE. HE
KEEPS TALKING TO SOME
IMAGINARY PLAYMATE.

"BOOTSY."
YEAH. I KNOW.
HE'S LOST A
FRIEND
RECENTLY.

YEAH.
BUT
THAT'S
NOT
ALL.



WHAT
DO YOU
KNOW ABOUT
SOMEONE
NAMED
"SPAWN"?

THE
CRIME
SCENE:

A DOCKSIDE WAREHOUSE.
A FOUL AND ICY WIND
BLOWS IN FROM OFF THE
RIVER AND CUTS THROUGH
THE NIGHT WITH FROZEN
DAGGERS.

BUT IT IS THE PALPABLE
STING OF TERROR THAT
SCORES AND SCRATCHES
ITS WAY THROUGH THE
UNEARTHLY FORM OF
THE HELLSPAWN.

IT BURROWS DEEP INTO
HIS CONSCIOUSNESS,
AND SPREADS OUT TO
EVERY FIBER OF HIS
BEING. PANIC. FEAR.
UNSPEAKABLE
DESPERATION.

THE PLACE STINKS OF
DEATH... RANCID, YET
ALMOST SWEET IN ITS
WAY... LIKE THE
BURNING OF LEAVES.

HE CAN STILL HEAR
THE HOPELESS CRIES
OF TERROR, THE
FRUITLESS PLEADINGS
OF A CHILD ECHOING
OFF THE CONCRETE
WALLS.

HER NAME...
HER NAME
WAS FAWN.

A CRUDE OUTLINE ON THE GROUND:
A GRIM AND FINAL PERIMETER IS
ALL THAT IS LEFT TO MEASURE THIS
LIFE SNUFFED OUT SO VICIOUSLY,
SO NEEDLESSLY.

IF YOUR LIFE FLASHES BEFORE
YOU WHEN YOU DIE, IT IS A
DEATH THAT CAREENS LIKE A
FREIGHT TRAIN THROUGH
THE CORE OF SPAWN.

A CHILD... A RUNAWAY...
GREW UP THE HARD WAY
LONG BEFORE HER TIME...

BUT STILL, IT IS A CHILD'S
THOUGHTS THAT FILLED HER
LAST MOMENTS ON EARTH:

"I WANT TO
GO HOME..."

"I WANT MY
MOMMY."

"GOD, PLEASE
LET THIS BE A
BAD DREAM."

THE SPAWN DRINKS IN EVERY HORRID
SENSATION. THE THUNDERCLAP OF
FOOTSTEPS MOVING CLOSER... A
GLOVED HAND THAT SILENCES THE
GIRL'S PLEAS FOR MERCY...

THE FIRST SLASH OF STEEL
SEVERS THE CAROTID ARTERY,
THE SURPRISING HEAT OF HER
BLOOD MORE SHOCKING
THAN THE PAIN.

THEN ANOTHER CUT...
THIS TIME ABOVE THE
LEFT BREAST. FORCEFUL,
CLINICAL. AND THEN
EVERYTHING BLURS.

SOMETHING MOVES LANGUIDLY THROUGH
THE AIR, IN SLOW MOTION... A CASCADE
OF TINY, IVORY-COLORED SPHERES,
TUMBLING THROUGH THE NIGHT...

LIKE DISTANT STARS, EACH A FAINT
PROMISE OF HOPE, OF A LIFE THAT
MIGHT HAVE TAKEN A DIFFERENT,
BETTER TURN. IF ONLY...

THE NIGHT TURNS TO
RED AND THEN THE
RED TURNS TO BLACK.

AND
IT IS
OVER.

ALONE. NO ONE TO
MOURN, NO ONE TO
LEND COMFORT. NO
ONE EVEN TO HEAR
HER CRIES. NO ONE
BUT THE LOWLIEST
OF THE LOW.



COME
HERE...



WHAT
ABOUT
YOU? WHAT
DID YOU
SEE?



WHOA
THERE, PALLY!
WHAT ARE
YOU DOING
HERE?



POLICE!
HANDS UP!
HANDS UP
NOW!

HE'S
RUNNING
FOR IT!

I DON'T
BELIEVE
THIS. HE'S
RUNNING
FOR IT?





SKLADANG!

UFF!

FREEZE!

BLAM!
BLAM!

HEY,
YOU OKAY,
PETE?
WHERE THE
HELL'D HE
GO?

HUH?
WHAT
DID YOU
SAY?

Cough
Cough
mumble
Cough



I SAID
Cough
DID YOU GET
A GOOD LOOK
AT HIM?

NO.
TOO DARK.
WE BETTER
PHONE THIS
IN.

THE NEXT DAY:

ARE YOU KIDDING?
SGT. JOE FRIDAY ON
"DRAGNET". NO QUESTION
ABOUT IT.

FIRST TIME
I HEARD HIM
READ SOMEONE HIS
RIGHTS, I KNEW
WHAT I WANTED
TO DO FOR A
LIVING.

Oh, I KNOW
WHAT YOU MEAN.
FOR ME IT WAS
NURSE DIXIE ON
"EMERGENCY".

SOME-
THING ABOUT
THAT STARCHED
WHITE UNIFORMS
JUST SANG
TO ME.



I KNOW IT
PROBABLY SOUNDS
SILLY, BUT I GUESS I
LIKE THINKING OF
MYSELF AS ONE OF THE
GOOD GUYS, DOING
MY PART FOR
SOCIETY.

DOESN'T
SOUND
SILLY
TO ME.

THANKS
AGAIN FOR
HELPING BOBBY
OUT. IT WAS
GOOD OF YOU TO
VOUCH FOR
HIM.



I WAS
MORE THAN
HAPPY TO DO IT.
THAT'S PART OF
WHAT THE OUT-
REACH CENTER
IS FOR.

THANK GOD
HE HELD ON TO
MY CARD. POOR
SOUL. HE'S REALLY
HAD A ROUGH
TIME LATELY,
HASN'T HE?

YNNGH
DAAHS
GRRGGHT

EXCUSE
ME?

SORRY. I SAID YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT. OLD GUY'S BEEN ON THE STREET A LONG TIME. AIN'T THERE SOME WAY TO HELP HIM OUT, Y'KNOW, PERMANENTLY?

THERE'S NOT MUCH WE CAN DO UNTIL HE GETS SERIOUS ABOUT HIS SOBRIETY. BUT HE'S ONE OF THE GOOD ONES. I HAVE *FAITH* IN HIM.

I BELIEVE THE GOOD LORD HELPS THOSE WHO HELP THEMSELVES. I HONESTLY DO. THE ONES THAT WON'T-- AND BELIEVE ME, IT'S NOT THAT THEY *CAN'T*, IT'S THAT THEY *WON'T*--

WELL, I SUPPOSE IT'S NOT MY PLACE TO *JUDGE*, BUT I HAVE TO SAY I THINK THEY GET WHAT THEY DESERVE. DOES THAT SOUND COLD?

NAH. NOT AT ALL. I MEAN, YOU CAN'T SAVE EVERYONE. BUT AT LEAST YOU'RE TRYING.

THIS CITY, HELL, THIS *WORLD*, IS SUCH A MESS AND THERE AIN'T ENOUGH PEOPLE INTERESTED IN CLEANING UP--

OOPS!

Oh, JESUS CHRIST, I'M SORRY. HERE, HOLD STILL... SORRY... DID I GET YOUR EYE...?

IT'S OKAY, IT'S OKAY.

EXCUSE ME. LET ME GO CLEAN UP PROPERLY.

I'LL BE HERE. HURRY BACK.

--TRUE
THAT
ARRESTS
HAVE BEEN
MADE?

--EXACTLY
IS THE MAYOR'S
POSITION ON
LONG TERM
FUNDING
FOR--



-- OR DENY
RUMORS THAT
A "MYSTERIOUS
INTRUDER" WAS
SEEN AT THE
LAST CRIME
SCENE?..



-- WHAT
CAN YOU
SAY TO
ASSURE
THE
PUBLIC--



ONE AT A TIME,
PLEASE. FIRST OF ALL, LET
ME MAKE IT CLEAR: WHILE
CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS HAVE
BEEN HELD FOR QUESTIONING,
NO ARRESTS HAVE BEEN
MADE AT THIS TIME.

SECOND, THE MAYOR
AND HIS STAFF ARE COMMIT-
TED TO PROVIDING EMERGENCY
SHELTER FOR ANYONE WISHING
TO AVAIL THEMSELVES OF IT,
UNTIL THIS KILLER IS IDEN-
TIFIED AND CAPTURED.

WE ARE
MAKING
PROGRESS AND
HOPE TO HAVE
ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION
AVAILABLE
SHORTLY.



WHAT
ABOUT THE
LATEST
MURDER?

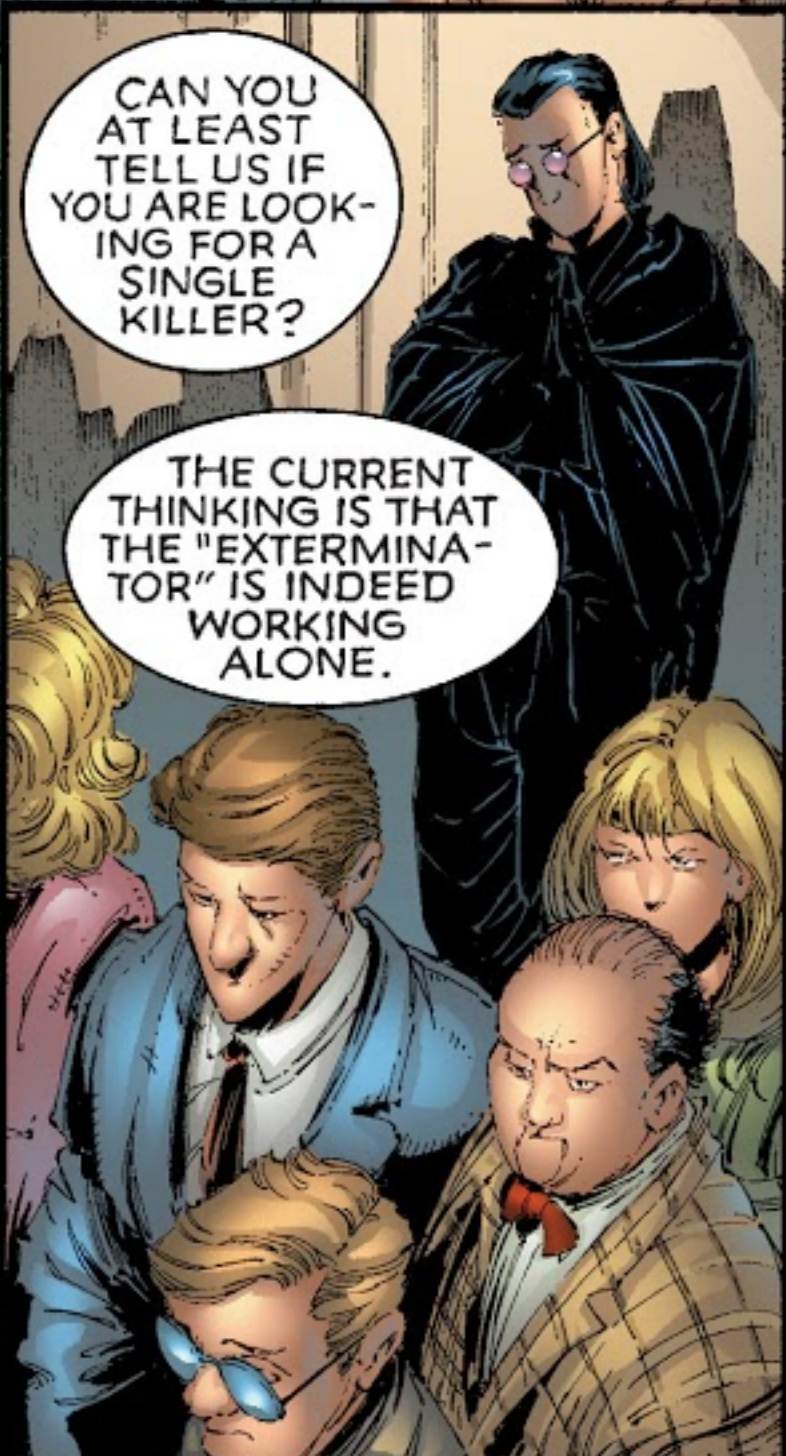
IT HAS BEEN
REPORTED THAT
THE VICTIM WAS
A MINOR.
HAVE HER
PARENTS BEEN
NOTIFIED?



I CANNOT
COMMENT
ON THAT.
NEXT?

CAN YOU
AT LEAST
TELL US IF
YOU ARE LOOK-
ING FOR A
SINGLE
KILLER?

THE CURRENT
THINKING IS THAT
THE "EXTERMINA-
TOR" IS INDEED
WORKING
ALONE.



HOWEVER,
WE HAVE NOT
RULED OUT THE
NOTION OF
MULTIPLE
KILLERS.

THE POLICE
DO HAVE A
WORKING THEORY,
BUT WE'RE NOT
ABOUT TO CLOSE
THE DOOR ON ANY
POSSIBILITIES.
NEXT.





HE'S PLAYING
WITH ME. THE KILLER.
I CAN FEEL IT. IT'S ALL
PART OF SOME SICK
GAME.



TREAD
CAUTIOUSLY,
SPAWN.

I HAVE A
SUSPICION
THAT THERE'S
MORE TO THIS
BLOODY MESS
THAN WE CAN
GUESS.



DAMN IT, COG.
YOU DON'T UNDER-
STAND! I CAN STILL FEEL
HER INSIDE MY HEAD... HER
LUNGS CLUTCHING BREATH,
THE TERROR BURNING
THROUGH HER
SOUL.

THESE ARE
MY PEOPLE
BEING KILLED. THE
ALLEYS ARE UNDER
MY PROTECTION. FOR
GOOD OR ILL, THIS IS
MY FIGHT AND
I WILL NOT
BACK DOWN!



SOMEONE
IS GOING TO PAY
FOR THIS COG. I
SWEAR, I WILL FIND
WHOEVER IS
DOING THIS.

AND I WILL
MAKE THEM
SUFFER!

NO ONE
ELSE WILL
DIE ON MY
WATCH!



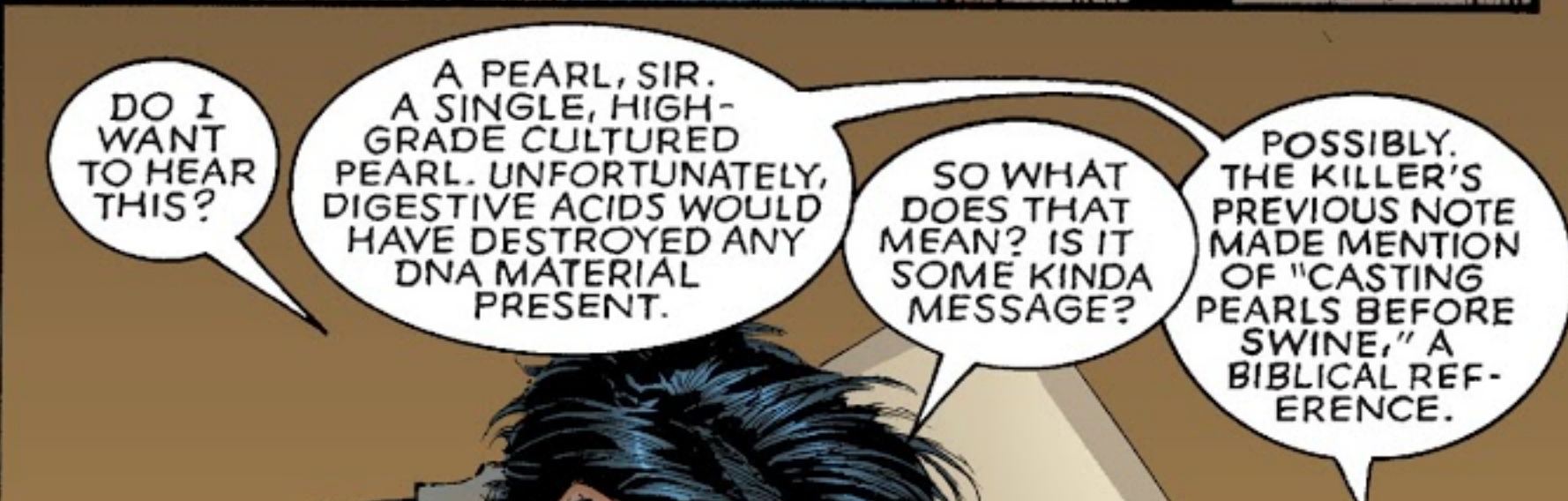
OKAY, TWITCH, LAY IT ON ME.



WELL, SIR. IT'S NOT GOOD. DETECTIVE SILBERT JUST FAXED OVER THE MEDICAL EXAMINER'S PRELIMINARY REPORT ON VICTIM NUMBER FIVE.

AS WITH THE PREVIOUS VICTIMS, THERE'S ALMOST NO PHYSICAL EVIDENCE LEFT BY THE KILLER.

THERE IS ONE DIFFERENCE. THEY **FOUND** SOMETHING IN THE GIRL'S STOMACH.



DO I WANT TO HEAR THIS?

A PEARL, SIR. A SINGLE, HIGH-GRADE CULTURED PEARL. UNFORTUNATELY, DIGESTIVE ACIDS WOULD HAVE DESTROYED ANY DNA MATERIAL PRESENT.

SO WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? IS IT SOME KINDA MESSAGE?

POSSIBLY. THE KILLER'S PREVIOUS NOTE MADE MENTION OF "CASTING PEARLS BEFORE SWINE," A BIBLICAL REFERENCE.



SOMETHING ELSE WILL PIQUE YOUR INTEREST, SIR. THE YOUNG RUNAWAY SEEMS TO HAVE HAD CONTACT WITH THAT NEW ACQUAINTANCE OF YOURS, MS. FROST.

SOCIAL SERVICES SET HER UP WITH THE OUTREACH PROGRAM, BUT SHE APPARENTLY REFUSED HELP. WOULDN'T SHOW UP TO APPOINTMENTS.

PERHAPS YOU COULD SPEAK TO MS. FROST, SEE IF SHE REMEMBERS ANYTHING?



YEAH. I COULD DO THAT.



Um...
"GOOD
EVENING,
MS. FROST..."
NO... NO...
"HEY, SARAH.
HATE TO
BOTHER
YOU THIS
LATE."



"WELL... I'M
AFRAID I'M
ON OFFICIAL
BUSINESS."



"DANGEROUS?
WELL, YES...
THAT'S PART OF
THE JOB."



"WHAT?
WELL,
THANK YOU.
YES, AS A
MATTER OF
FACT, I *DO*
WORK
OUT."

"IF YOU
DON'T MIND
MY SAYING
SO, SARAH,
YOU'RE
LOOKING
RATHER--"



--CLOSED.
DAMN."



Groan

WHAT
THE HELL?
BOBBY?
HEY MAN,
IS THAT
YOU?



Oh,
JEEZUS
BOBBY, WHAT
HAPPENED
TO YOU?



THINGS WILL START MOVING VERY QUICKLY NOW. YOU CAN BE SURE OF THAT.

LOOK AT YOU, YOU'RE SOAKED.

I'M SO TIRED. JUST LET ME SLEEP.



UGHN! C'MON, LET'S GET YOU INSIDE. GET YOU DRY. HOW MUCH DID YOU HAVE TO DRINK?



ALL EVENTS ARE RUSHING HEADLONG TOWARD THEIR INEVITABLE CONCLUSION.

BOBBY, I NEED YOU TO FOCUS. STAY AWAKE, YOU HEAR ME! I'M GONNA GET YOU SOME HELP!



THE PIECES ARE ALL IN PLACE. THE COURSE IS SET.

I JUS' ... I JUS' WANNA SLEEP...

DAMN IT BOBBY, STAY AWAKE! I'M CALLING AN AMBULANCE.



HELLO! HELLO! SONUVA BITCH!

HOW DO I GET AN OUTSIDE LINE?! THIS IS WHAT WE GET FOR BREAKING UP MA BELL!



CERTAINLY, A PAWN OR TWO MAY HAVE TO BE SACRIFICED...

COLD... I'M SO COLD...

... BUT THE **ENDGAME** IS NEAR.



JEEZUS, YOU'RE GOING INTO SHOCK. HERE. TAKE MY COAT. I'LL TRY TO FIND YOU A BLANKET.

WE'LL GET YOU WARMED UP AND I'LL DRIVE YOU TO A HOSPITAL, OKAY? JUST HANG IN THERE!

ONCE IT IS OVER,
EVERYONE WILL
LOOK BACK AND
SAY IT WAS
OBVIOUS.



THEY'LL SAY,
"I KNEW IT
ALL ALONG."



"SAW IT COMING
FROM A MILE
AWAY."



SWEET
MARY AND
JOSEPH
ON A
PONY...

A Serpent in the Garden
Unclean

Tongues of
Devil

Tongues of
Angels

AND EVERY
SINGLE
LAST ONE
OF THEM
WILL BE
**DEAD
WRONG.**

Idle
HANDS

Hearts of
DARKNESS

His Blood is
my Wire

NEXT: THE
CLEANSING

